Men of Renown.

Character Sketches.

DANIEL WISE.

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

MEN OF RENOWN:

CHARACTER SKETCHES

OF

Men Distinguished as Patriots, Statesmen, Writers, Reformers, Merchants, etc.

BY DANIEL WISE, D. D.,

AUTHOR OF

"UNCROWNED KINGS," "VANQUISHED VICTORS," "STORY OF A WONDERFUL LIFE," "OUR MISSIONARY HEROES AND HEROINES," ETC.

"When a great man dies,
For years beyond our ken,
The light he leaves behind him lies
Upon the paths of men."

—LONGFELLOW.

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Introductory Words to Young Men.

A YOUTH, on reaching his fifteenth year, passes out of boyhood into what has been not unfitly called the "tedious time of adolescence." In his thoughtful moments he feels, as never before, that the long period of his dependence on his father or guardian is not to last forever. In the near future he sees himself in the busy world contending amidst self-seeking multitudes for a maintenance, a position, a reputation, a successful career. Usually he is self-confident, and therefore hopeful. For him to win some great prize in life seems easy, because he is apt to overrate his own capabilities, and to underrate the obstacles which lie, "thick as Autumnal leaves in Vallambrosa," in the path of every prize winner. If he be ambitious, he may dream of accomplished greatness, and exclaim with the sickly young midshipman, who afterwards became England's most famous admiral, "I will be a great man."

With the young man who cherishes such glowing anticipations the writer, who has almost finished his part in the great drama of mortal life, feels a genuine sym-

pathy. He would not throw the least shadow between him and the star which his hope has created. He would rather stimulate his ambition and bid him enter bravely, cheerfully, and confidently into the period of his adolescence, cherishing bright expectations of a noble manhood beyond it. And because of this sympathy, because he wishes that his life may be crowned with imperishable laurels, he has prepared these sketches of "men of renown."

In his simple, but beautiful, "Psalm of Life," Longfellow says:

> "Lives of great men all remind us
> We can make our lives sublime."

This is true. Lives of great men are either beacons to warn the young of danger, or lights to direct them into havens of satisfying repose. They may, however, if not read aright, be like the false lights of wreckers which lure unwary mariners to destruction. If they lead aspiring young men to pursue renown, not as a resultant of merit, but as an end to be sought, irrespective of moral and religious character, they are false lights. Renown gained by ignoble means is worthless as a bubble on the wave. Hence, the aim of a wisely ambitious youth will be, not merely to win distinction, but to *deserve* it. And it may be accepted as a fact, that he whose merits deserve renown, usually wins it. If not, then unrecognized merit is a more precious jewel than

renown without a character that men can respect and heaven love.

The thoughtful reader of these sketches will scarcely fail to discover in them the secret of success in life. The men herein sketched lived centuries apart, in two hemispheres, under very varied circumstances, and they won their honors in very diverse spheres of action. But they all succeeded through *doing their very best, putting forth their might under the opportunities given them in the order of Divine Providence.* Those opportunities were very unlike. Lincoln and the Lawrence brothers had very few educational advantages. Adams gained his education under influences which tended to divert him from study, as also did Fox. Hawthorne, Smith, Cromwell, Cranmer, Erasmus, and Chaucer were more highly favored. But they all made more or less diligent use, first of their opportunities to acquire knowledge, and then of such openings as they found for the exercise of their respective natural gifts. Whatsoever their hands found to do, they did with their might.

In this common feature of their early career the young man may see the key which must open the door to such distinction as he is qualified to win. Providence is sure to give him opportunities. It is for him to find and improve them. They may not look like doors to success. Lincoln's opportunity to borrow a few books from the farmers of his neigborhood did not look at all

like an opening to a path leading to the presidential chair; yet it was actually so. Had he foreseen his destiny, he might have said of it as Shakespeare's Prospero did of his star:

> "I find my zenith doth depend upon
> A most conspicuous star, whose influence,
> If now I count not, but omit, my fortunes
> Will ever after droop."

For had he neglected to search for that reading, and to make it the pabulum of his thoughts, he never could have become a distinguished man. Let the youth stick a pin in this fact, and remember that his present opportunity to study or to work is his gateway to such heights as he is intellectually and morally qualified to climb. Shakespeare, using a different figure, says:

> "There is a tide in the affairs of men
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

In the reader's affairs the tide that may lead him to success is flowing past his door. It is in his opportunity for self-improvement, whether it be an opening for private study, for an academic and collegiate education, or for learning some branch of business. Whatever it be, if entered into with his might and followed with sound judgment, it will lead him to all the distinction he is qualified to attain. If neglected, it may, probably will, leave him to struggle with the miseries which await

those whose indolence makes them, not working bees, but drones in the great human hive.

Let the young man further note, that renown is not always allied to piety. A bad man may win a great name among men. Fox won a high reputation for oratory, but he was not even morally pure. Lincoln, Adams, Hawthorne, Smith, and Chaucer, though not without religious convictions and habits, were not spiritually minded men. Cromwell, though decidedly devout, cultivated a piety more Jewish than Christian in its spirit. Erasmus lacked the courage of a Paul; and even Cranmer, though heroically and gloriously true at the end of his life, yet, in the beginning of his ecclesiastical career, yielded more to the whims and wishes of bluff King Henry than was consistent with a pure, high-toned Christian experience. Thus all these distinguished men sink somewhat in one's estimation when impartially weighed in the "balances of the sanctuary." Had they all been as thoroughly Christian as St. Paul or St. John, their renown would have been more glorious than it is. Remember, therefore, O young man, in seeking honor from men, that merit is more precious than renown, and that "the Christian is the highest style of man."

ENGLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY.

I.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

The Preserver of his Country.

"Perish discretion when it interferes
With duty! Perish the false policy
Of human wit, which would commute our safety
With God's eternal honor! Shall his law
Be set at naught that I may live at ease?"

—Hannah More.

IN American history two names will always shine as stars of the first magnitude, and of a brightness more attractive than dazzling. These, one scarcely needs to say, are George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. The one by his military achievements and statesmanship made our national existence possible; the other, by the force of his character and his superior political wisdom, preserved the unity of our national life. These men, though unlike in many things, resembled each other in that they won the confidence and leadership of the people, not so much by the superiority and brilliancy of their genius, as by a singular com-

bination of lofty moral qualities with high intellectual ability which gave them that stability and symmetry of character that gradually disarmed their opponents, and inspired the people with faith that each, in his turn, was the providential man for the hour in which he held the reins of public destiny in his hands. In the present sketch we shall see how greatly Abraham Lincoln's character contributed to his success in saving his country from being broken in twain by the strength and fierceness of the great rebellion of 1861.

Abraham Lincoln was not born in a home of wealth, culture, and refinement, but in the humble cabin of a rough, hardy farmer in Hardin County, Kentucky, on the 12th of February, 1809. Yet neither his father nor his ancestors were low-born, but industrious, respectable farmers, hunters, and pioneers in Virginia and Kentucky. His mother is said to have been a beautiful woman, of much natural refinement, a lover of such books as could be found in a backwoods home, affectionately devoted to her family, and possessed of deep religious feeling. In the absence of a school she became young Abraham's teacher, giving him his first lessons in reading and writing, and impressing upon his ready mind those lessons of truth, prob-

ity, and reverence for divine things which contributed so materially to the formation of his character. Though she died when the boy was only about nine years old, yet he always retained a most tender love and respect for her memory, often saying with deep feeling, "All that I am or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."

In 1816 Lincoln's father removed to Indiana. Near Abraham's new home a school was occasionally kept, but the lad never enjoyed more than twelve months' instruction from its wretchedly qualified teachers; yet he loved books, and eagerly read the few that could be found in the settlement. Nor was his reading superficial, but thorough. He completely mastered what he read, and carefully copied into a scrap-book such passages as he thought of especial value. If he heard of a book at a distance, he often walked many miles to borrow it; and, after the toil of the day, frequently sat up far into the night to feed upon its contents. This love of reading fed his mind and stimulated its growth. Better still was his habit of thinking over the facts and reasoning of his books. He did not treat his mind as if it was a sieve, through which his reading was to pass and be wasted, but as endowed with power to reflect, to reason, to remember, to

discriminate between truth and falsehood, and to gain strength by exercise. Hence, whether he spent the day in hunting game for food, in following the plow, in sowing, reaping, hoeing, or husking, he kept his thoughts busy on the topic of the books he had recently read. By such thinking he made his mind a storehouse of facts which he digested into opinions, he acquired a habit of viewing things through his judgment. And it was by thus making the best use possible of his few early opportunities of self-improvement that he prepared himself to make every new opportunity a means of rising still higher in his path to power over men.

One result of this intellectual self-discipline was the birth of a lofty ambition to be a doer of great deeds, and of a determination to educate himself. Moved by this purpose we find him studying the elements of arithmetic and algebra, the books of Euclid, Latin grammar, surveying and composition. That he might acquire the art of speech-making he often spent his spare hours in a neighboring store telling stories, jesting, and talking to the loungers he found there. Those who listened to his humorous remarks and graphic descriptions of men and things, learned to like him for the entertainment he afforded them, little thinking that, in amusing them,

their boisterous approbation was not the end he sought, but that he was simply exercising his natural gifts with a view to the acquisition of an oratorical and conversational power, by which he might hereafter move the minds of masses of men.

Every quick-witted boy has his day dreams of future greatness, most of which are shortlived and as profitless as soap bubbles. But this rough boy of the forest and prairie, when only seventeen years old, had an impression which proved to be more than an idle dream, and which moved him to say, with all seriousness, to his throbbing heart, "I shall some day be President of the United States!" It was a singular presentiment, the source of which who can satisfactorily point out?

When he was twenty-one years of age he accompanied his father to Illinois and, after aiding him with his great strength and skill in woodcraft and farm work to prepare a new home, he quitted the paternal roof and went out to seek his fortune with no capital but perfect health, the strength of an athlete, aptitude for work and study, absolutely temperate habits, upright character, and high ambition to be a man of mark. His only capital, therefore, was *himself*.

His first employment was that of a boatman on

a flat-bottomed craft, laden with provisions for the New Orleans market. The remarkable fact of this trip was the impression made upon his mind by the spectacle of a beautiful mulatto girl and other slaves sold at auction in the slave market. The shameful spectacle stirred his tender heart to its lowest depths and, as if inspired by a forecast of his coming destiny, he said to his companion, John Hanks:

"If I ever get a chance to hit that institution, I'll hit it hard, John!"

That great chance was given him, and he gave slavery its death-wound when, thirty-two years after, he put his name to the Emancipation Proclamation.

Returning from New Orleans, he became first a salesman in a country store, next a volunteer, doing good service in the Black Hawk war; after this a partner with a worthless fellow named Berry, in keeping a small store at New Salem, Illinois. This store did not succeed, and it required all his savings during the ensuing six years to pay off his liabilities consequent on this failure. Nevertheless, it was while in this store that his scrupulous honesty in every detail of the business won him that *sobriquet* of "Honest Abe," which, being uniformly illustrated by all his subsequent conduct, adhered to him like a title of honor to the close of his eventful life.

Lincoln's path was still obstructed with discouraging difficulties. He was so poor that his life, for two or three years, was a struggle for bread. While yet in his little store at New Salem he made up his mind to become a lawyer. With this view he began the study of Blackstone's "Commentaries," which he thoroughly mastered. Mr. Stuart, a Springfield lawyer, loaned him other law books, to the study of which he devoted himself with the intense eagerness of enthusiastic determination. In a short time he was able to draw up legal contracts and to appear as counsel in small cases before justices of the peace. To such practice he added the work of a surveyor, in which he soon acquired a good reputation for accuracy. Still, for some time, his income was very small, and being burdened with the debts incurred by his failure, it kept him almost within reach of the threatening jaws of troublesome poverty. Yet such was the confidence of the people in his uprightness and such his personal popularity that, in 1834, he was elected a member of the Illinois Legislature, and was regarded as the most popular man in Sangamon County.

Opportunities are the tests of strength and character. Multitudes of young men give promise of superiority, but are like trees which produce only

fruitless blossoms, when the opportunity to achieve something is given them. We now find young Lincoln on the first vantage ground afforded him by the circumstances of his birth and early surroundings. It is now given him to rise into further public notice, or to sink back into the insignificance of an ordinary life. How will he acquit himself?

We find him ambitious, but prudent. He does not plunge into rash debate with his fellow legislators. He rather makes his seat a point of observation. He studies men and legislative methods. He notes how measures are carried or lost. Outside the state-house he talks with men superior to himself in education and culture. He reads many books; he pursues his legal studies; he sedulously prepares himself for the high positions to which his secret and singular premonitions assure him he will sooner or later be called.

In 1836, being again nominated for a seat in the Legislature, it became necessary for him to debate with his opponents "on the stump," at a county meeting held in the court-house, at Springfield, Illinois. Lincoln was the last of the candidates to speak. His speech surprised both friends and foes. It captured the sympathies, if not the convictions, of the assembled crowd, and it sharp-

ened the asperities of a man named Forquer who, though not a candidate, asked permission to reply in behalf of the Democrats. He began by turning to Lincoln, and saying, "This young man must be taken down, and I am truly sorry that the task devolves upon me." After this insolent introduction he assailed the young orator's speech with the rude sarcasm of the stump, and poured such a flood of ungenerous ridicule, first on his arguments, and then on his uncouth person and coarse dress, that Lincoln's friends were not a little dismayed.

It was a trying moment for the young candidate, but he was fully equal to the occasion. He rose, calm in manner, but indignant at heart. His eye flashed fire, his cheeks were pale, but his voice was firm and his thoughts collected. He quickly pointed out the fallacies in Mr. Forquer's arguments, and then, in taking up his personal remarks, said, "The gentleman commenced his speech by saying that this young man, meaning myself, must be taken down. I am not so young in years as I am in the tricks and the trades of a politician, but live long or die young, I would rather die now than, like this gentleman, change my politics, and with the change receive an office worth three thousand dollars a year, and then feel obliged to erect a lightning-

rod over my house to protect a guilty conscience from an offended God!"

To appreciate the effect of this retort on that excited crowd, the reader must be told that Forquer was a recreant Whig, whose recent going over to the Democrats had been rewarded with the gift of a fat office, and that his house was the only one in Springfield or vicinity protected by lightning-rods, the use of which was, at that time, very little understood by the great body of the people. Lincoln's shrewd, sharp wit had made such telling use of both the rod and of Forquer's profitable recreancy that, instead of being himself taken down, he had put down his pompous adversary so effectually that, says Mr. Arnold, Lincoln's best biographer, "Forquer and his lightning-rod were talked over in every settlement from the Sangamon to the Illinois and the Wabash. Whenever he rose to speak thereafter they said, 'There is the man who dares not sleep in his own house without a lightning-rod to protect him from the wrath of the Almighty!'"

Lincoln's reputation as a powerful speaker, won on this occasion, was vastly increased by his victories in debates with other Democratic orators during the same canvass. Nor was it at all diminished by the active part he took in the discussions

of the ensuing Legislature. And, as early as 1838, he was the acknowledged leader of his party in the State; albeit, in 1837, he had shown his independence and courage by drawing up and signing a protest against the cruel laws concerning negroes, which then disgraced the statute book of Illinois. Only one other man in the Legislature had the courage to sign that famous protest which, though not extreme, was yet far in advance of prevailing public opinion.

Lincoln, though a member of the bar, was still so poor that, when he removed to Springfield in 1837, he rode on a borrowed horse and carried all his earthly goods, consisting of books and clothing, in a pair of saddle-bags. Not having means to furnish a room, he was glad to share the bed of his friend, John F. Speed, whose small sleeping chamber was over his store. Happily, however, he had reached the turning-point of his fortune. John T. Stuart, a lawyer of growing reputation and good practice, offered him a partnership. Cases were soon put into his hands. His marked ability at once won the respect of the bench and the bar. His ready wit, abounding humor, and rare power of illustration soon made him popular with jurymen and spectators. His deep insight into men and

things, together with his rare capacity to make transparent statements, made him eminently successful, and, of course, brought him abundant business. Yet such was the moderation of his charges for professional services, that he never became a man of wealth. Having won his causes he did not cripple his clients by exorbitant demands. His honesty was ingrained, and gave color to all his transactions with other men.

In 1839 a young lady from Kentucky, of good lineage, became an inmate of the family of a distinguished lawyer named Edwards, at Springfield. She was a brunette, twenty-one years of age, of medium height, round and full in figure, with dark brown hair, and grayish blue eyes. In addition to these outward attractions she possessed mental qualities of no common order. Her education in a ladies' school in Lexington, Kentucky, had so developed her active mind that she was quick witted, sharp at repartee, and remarkably animated in her conversation. Moreover, she was ambitious, and, probably with girlish playfulness, had said to a friend, on leaving Lexington, "I mean to marry some one who will become President of the United States."

Shortly after her arrival at Springfield this Lex-

ington belle, whose name was Mary Todd, was introduced to Abraham Lincoln. Her friends had described him to her as a bright particular and rising political star. After dining with him at the same table one day, an old gentleman said to her, half jestingly, "Mary, I have heard that you have said you want to marry a man who will be President. If so, Abe Lincoln is your man." How much her ambition had to do with her affections does not fully appear. What is known is, that our popular young lawyer soon became Mary Todd's ardent admirer; that his admiration ripened into affection; that Mary Todd reciprocated his regards; and that on the 4th of November, 1842, they were married. It is assuredly a singular coincidence that a woman who had in thought imagined herself destined to be the wife of a President, should have married a man who had an abiding presentiment that he should one day fill that high office. It is still more remarkable that both her girlish fancy and his youthful presentiment should have reached a final realization. Had both foreseen the tragic ending of their respective careers, their romantic dreams of a lofty destiny, instead of filling their young hearts with joyous hopes, would have given birth to melancholy apprehensions.

In 1846 Abraham Lincoln was triumphantly elected to Congress over his Democratic opponent, the eccentric Peter Cartwright. He had shown his political sincerity by identifying himself with the Whig party at a time when it appeared to be in a hopeless minority. It would seem, therefore, that his attachment to it was not that of a self-seeking politician, but was the outgrowth of an honest faith in its principles. He took the unpopular side, as he did on the temperance and slavery questions, which were both looming up into importance when he entered into public life. When almost every body drank and thought it right to drink, he abstained from drinking, as he did also from the profanity which was general among the associates of his early life. And, as already noted, fearless of its influence on his popularity and prospects, he dared to put himself on record as the determined opponent of the institution of slavery. His career was, from the first, that of a man candidly avowing his high ambitions, yet determined to succeed, if at all, by conscientious adhesion to his avowed convictions. And it can scarcely be doubted that it was because his speeches for his party were the earnest utterances of propositions he really believed, that they were effectual, not merely in securing him a

seat in the Legislature for eight successive years, but also in producing such a change in the political opinions of his district that, as stated above, in 1846 it elected him to Congress. His oratorical powers were exceptionally great; yet it was not by these alone that he achieved success, but by ability allied with sincerity too transparent to be seriously doubted.

Lincoln's success in the Congress of 1847–8 was, if not brilliant, yet very decided. For a new member he spoke frequently and always to the point. By an elaborate speech in 1848, on the Mexican war, "he established his reputation in Congress as an able debater." The refined and scholarly Robert C. Winthrop admired his superior "shrewdness, sagacity, and keen practical sense." Alexander H. Stephens, no mean judge of men, said: "He always attracted and riveted the attention of the House when he spoke. His manner of speech, as well as of thought, was original. He had no model. He was a man of strong convictions, and what Carlyle would have called an earnest man. He abounded in anecdote."

While in this Congress he illustrated his hostility to slavery by offering a bill to promote its abolition in the District of Columbia. But the pro-slavery sentiment of the House was so strong

that he could not bring it to a vote. Nevertheless, he had for his reward the consciousness of having done his duty.

In the canvass which resulted in the election of President Zachary Taylor, Lincoln did yeoman's service, not only in the West, but also in New York and New England. After serving his term in Congress, having declined to be a candidate for re-election, he returned to Springfield and resumed the duties of his profession. During the next ten years he devoted himself to his law practice with unremitting zeal and with enviable success. So numerous were the calls for his services, both in the State and United States Courts that, but for what his brethren of the bar called his "ridiculously small" fees, he might have become a rich man. But he was a man of very simple and economical habits. He cultivated no expensive tastes, and his hospitality, though generous and cordial, was never extravagant. Hence his charges for professional service seemed to be more nearly proportioned to his personal needs than to the demands and pecuniary ability of his clients. He was quite contented with an income of from two thousand to three thousand dollars per annum, and with property estimated by Mr. Arnold at from ten to twenty thousand dollars.

The vice of avarice found no resting-place in the heart of "honest Abe."

Judge Drummond, speaking of Lincoln's professional work, said: "He was one of the most successful lawyers we ever had in the State." Judge David Davis said: "In order to bring into activity his great powers, it was necessary he should be convinced of the right and justice of the case he advocated. When so convinced, whether the case was great or small, he was usually successful."

This latter statement shows the intrinsic nobleness of Lincoln's nature. His moral instincts were so strong and pure that they refused even to simulate sympathy with wrong, or to rouse his intellect to activity in defense of it. To secure the triumph of truth and justice, not to pocket a fee or win reputation, was the end he sought. And when occasion called him to denounce injustice or wrong, his words were so scathing that the object of his denunciation sometimes fled from the court-room "weeping with rage and mortification."

In examining and cross-examining a witness, Mr. Arnold says: "He had no equal. He could compel a witness to tell the truth when he meant to lie, and if a witness lied, he rarely escaped exposure under Lincoln's cross-examination. His legal

arguments addressed to the judges were always clear, vigorous, and logical, seeking to convince by the application of principle rather than by the citation of cases. He seemed to magnetize every one. He was so straightforward, so direct, so candid, that every one was impressed with the idea that he was seeking only truth and justice."

These statements, amply justified by innumerable facts, show that Abraham Lincoln owed his success to a strong, clear intellect, furnished by much reading and clarified from mistiness and confusion by its alliance with a moral nature of the loftiest stature, and by sturdy, incorruptible integrity.

Had Abraham Lincoln died prior to the year 1856 his name, though honored in Illinois, would have had no place on the grand roll which records the deeds of men destined to perpetual remembrance among the nations of the earth. But the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in 1854, followed, as it was, by other measures demonstrating the purpose of the slave power to change slavery from a local to a national institution, led to those popular agitations in the free States which culminated in the organization of the Republican party at Bloomington, Illinois, on the 29th of May, 1856.

Of this convention Lincoln was the leading spirit, and its platform, which was his suggestion, was substantially adopted by the national convention of the Republican party, which nominated John C. Fremont in June of the same year. Two years later the Illinois Republicans unanimously nominated Lincoln as their candidate for United States Senator. His speech on that occasion, and his subsequent addresses in his famous joint debates with Stephen A. Douglas, the champion of the Illinois Democrats, were of such a high order of eloquence, and showed such a complete acquaintance with the historical relations of slavery, that his reputation as a man and a statesman rose higher than ever. Douglas won the senatorship, but the popular voice accorded the palm to Lincoln as the more successful debater and the wiser statesman. He was, in fact, the real victor in the conflict, inasmuch as his speeches caused many to see in him the "coming man," the man best qualified and most worthy to be trusted with the banner of the Republican party in the approaching presidential struggle. And when, early in 1860, he spoke in the Eastern States, especially in New York City, before a highly-cultivated audience, his historical learning, his mastery of his subject, his dignity and obvious sin-

cerity of thought, and his sound reasoning were so apparent and surprising, that many who had hitherto thought of him only as an uncouth stump debater began to view him as a possible candidate for the presidential nomination. "He awoke," says Mr. Arnold, "the next morning [after his speech in New York] to find himself famous."

The Republicans of Illinois held a convention at Decatur in May, 1860. Lincoln was present. The deafening cheers which greeted his entrance into the hall demonstrated the confidence and the purpose of his friends. After the cheers subsided it was announced that "an old Democrat of Macon County wished to make a contribution to the convention. Immediately," says Arnold, "some farmers brought into the hall two old fence rails bearing the inscription, 'Abraham Lincoln, the rail candidate for the presidency in 1860. Two rails from a lot of three thousand made, in 1830, by Thomas Hanks and Abe Lincoln, whose father was the first pioneer of Macon County.'"

Fifteen minutes of continuous cheering followed this unique method of presenting the name of a candidate for the high office of President of these United States. There remained no doubt that Illinois Republicans were unanimous in their desire

to intrust the destinies of the country in the hands of a man whose integrity was unsoiled, whose ability was above question, and who owed very little to his circumstances, but almost every thing to himself. A few days later the national convention, sitting at Chicago, elected honest Abe, the rail-splitter, to be the Republican candidate for President. The North responded enthusiastically to his nomination, and Lincoln was triumphantly elected that Autumn. Thus the singular presentiment of the penniless backwoods boy and the girlish purpose of the belle of Lexington to be the wife of a President, were both fulfilled!

The tenderness and marital affection of Lincoln were characteristically shown when, on receiving the telegram from Chicago announcing his nomination on the third ballot, without waiting for the congratulations of his friends, he said, "There is a little woman down at our house who will like to hear this. I'll go down and tell her." Assuredly ambition did not reign so exclusively in this good man's heart as to leave no room in it for the free action of unselfish and social affections!

Success, even when righteously achieved, is not generally productive of unmixed joy. There is a cloud near, if not over, the sun. In Lincoln's case,

black and ominous clouds gathered quickly around the chair of power he was called to fill. Treason strutted boldly about the streets of Washington. Traitors filled many government offices, and with the most unblushing rascality placed the resources of the country where they might be used to strengthen the approaching rebellion. And their action, if not directly aided, was connived at by the dastardly hand of the man who was still in the presidential chair. Gloom spread like an impenetrable mist over the public mind. The prospects of the President elect were sufficiently alarming to daunt his courage and chill his heart. To his honor, be it said, he did not quail. He appreciated the danger, but stood loyally by his principles, avowing his purpose to yield nothing to the rebellious demands of the slave power, and declaring his belief that the providence of God would be on the side of liberty. "I see the storm coming," he said; "I know that God's hand is in it. . . . A revelation could not make it plainer to me that slavery or the government must be destroyed. The future would be something awful, as I look at it, but for this rock on which I stand."

That "rock" was the New Testament, a copy of which he held in his hand. He further declared that he thought a terrible struggle was at hand, and that

its issue would be the overthrow of slavery. He also "stated his belief in the duty, privilege, and efficacy of prayer."

In this humble spirit, and with this lofty trust, he proceeded to Washington at the appointed time, eluding, by an unexpected night journey from Harrisburg, certain conspirators who were watching in Baltimore to take his life. His inauguration ceremonies, through the precautions of General Scott, passed off quietly, and he entered at once upon the duties of his high office, which, owing to the great Secession already in progress, were more difficult of performance than at any time since the organization of the government.

The narrow limits of this sketch forbid even an outline of the events of his unparalleled administration. In his inaugural address, while affirming his unalterable purpose to execute the laws in all parts of the country, he also declared that he would not make war on the seceding States unless they should compel him to do so by first taking up arms against the government. If war must come, the South must strike the first blow. They did this by attacking Fort Sumter, in Charleston harbor. The booming of the rebel guns kindled the patriotic spirit of the North and, for the moment, men of all

parties, as with one voice, demanded the suppression of the causeless rebellion by force of arms. Seeing no alternative but the dissolution of the Union or its maintenance by the sword, Lincoln called the nation to arms. Nobly did the North respond to his summons, and the fratricidal strife, begun by rebel guns at Sumter, went on with varying success until, guided by the military genius of General Grant, the army of the Union triumphed. The defeated soldiers of the seceding States surrendered their arms, their battle-flags, and their cause at Appomattox, on April 14, 1865.

Through all this terrible strife, Abraham Lincoln demonstrated both the greatness of his character and his peerless qualifications for the leadership of men in perilous times. The nation trusted him because he was a true, honest, brave, cautious, sagacious, undaunted man. The friends of liberty followed him because they saw that his measures were neither rash nor timid, but timely and wise. Ambitious partisans, both in the army and in political circles, cruelly hampered him in his conduct of the war, but being patient, sagacious, and enduring, he finally rid the armies of the Union of incompetent and half-hearted commanders, and placed them under the direction of the military

hero whose deeds had demonstrated his capacity to conquer the ablest generals of the enemy.

Lincoln's grandest deed was his Emancipation Proclamation. The moment in which he transformed millions of human chattels into freemen by the stroke of his pen was the sublimest point in his eventful life. Doubtless, his heart throbbed with unspeakable delight when he did it. It was, indeed, the grand culmination of that hatred of oppression, of that sympathy with the oppressed, which made his breast heave with grief and anger when he first saw God's image sold like brute beasts in the New Orleans slave market. It was the hard blow he had then pledged himself to give the accursed institution should opportunity be given him. Yet his emotions were not unmixed with anxiety. He could not be sure that the nation was prepared for such a radical act. He had not hitherto thought it wise or safe himself. He had even questioned its absolute rightfulness under past conditions, since the main issue of the war had been, not the overthrow of slavery, but the preservation of the Union. But by the misfortunes of our armies in the field God had taught both him and the reflecting minds of the country, that the price of the preservation of the Union was the destruction of the evil which

had put it in peril. This conviction controlled his action and, trusting in the God of liberty, he signed the document which set millions free and made his own name immortal.

So strong was the confidence of the country in Lincoln's integrity and ability that, despite the desperate efforts of the Democratic party to elect the always unready McClellan, he was triumphantly re-elected in the Autumn of 1864. On the ninth of the following April General Lee surrendered his army to General Grant. On the fourteenth of the same month the last of the rebel armies laid down their arms. The great rebellion was then subdued, and the flag of the Union floated once more in peaceful triumph all over the land.

Lincoln rejoiced over this grand result of his administration. But he displayed no vainglory, no sense of proud self-exaltation, but said to the joyous crowds which gathered in front of the White House to congratulate him, "We meet in gladness of heart. The surrender of the insurgent army gives hope of a righteous and speedy peace. . . . In the midst of this He, from whom all blessings flow, must not be forgotten."

Noble words! They directed the thought of the nation, not to his great part in the mighty

struggle, but to the God of battles who had given success to its armies. They breathed not revenge and punishment for the subdued rebels, but peace and righteousness.

Yet, even in those hours of exultation, that honest heart was not wholly surrendered to joy. On the very day of the surrender of the last rebel force, while his cabinet was waiting the arrival of the indefatigable Stanton, his Secretary of War, a deep shadow stole across his spirits, and he said very gravely: "Gentlemen, something serious is going to happen; I have had a strange dream, and have a presentiment, such as I have had several times before, and always just before some important event. But"—seeing Mr. Stanton enter at that moment—he abruptly added, "let us proceed to business."

On the afternoon of that day he drove out with no companion but his wife. During their drive he said: "Mary, we have had a hard time of it since we came to Washington; but the war is over and, with God's blessing, we may hope for four years of peace and happiness, and then we will go back to Illinois and pass the rest of our lives in peace and quiet."

Then, with the freedom of a mind set free from

the strain of great cares of state, he talked of his early years and of what they would do in the quiet future. No ambitious images entered into his happy day-dream that afternoon, but only home-like pictures of domestic enjoyment among old friends and amidst scenes made attractive by their association with the events of earlier days. It was, doubtless, one of the happiest hours of his troubled life. Alas that it was only a prelude to his tragic end!

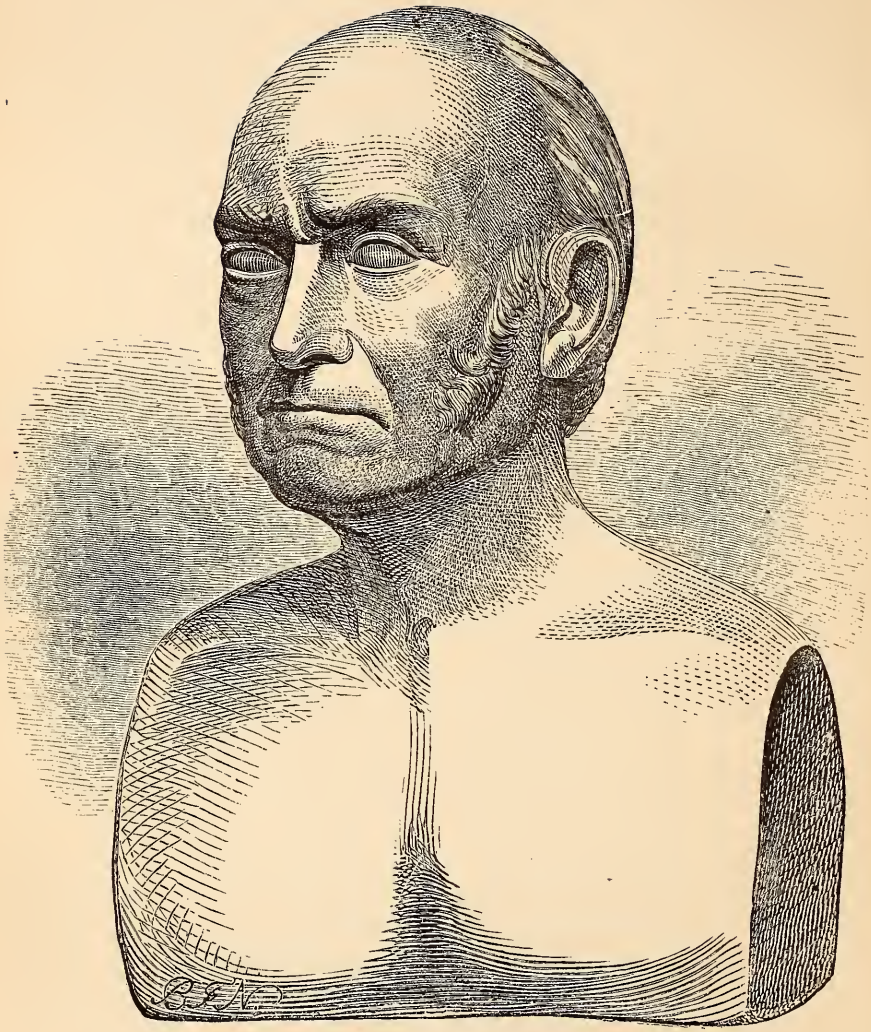
On the evening of that day possibly—one would fain say, probably—more to gratify the desire of the people to look upon his person than to enjoy the performance of the players, Lincoln visited the theater at about nine o'clock. His kindly smile and ungraceful bow responded to the cheers with which the audience welcomed his entrance to his box. One hour and a half later John Wilkes Booth stole, with a coward's stealthy tread, into the President's box, placed his pistol close to the back of Lincoln's head and fired. The President fell mortally wounded. The black-hearted assassin leaped from the box to the stage, exclaiming, "*Sic semper tyrannis*—the South is avenged;" then, crossing the stage, he escaped by its open door, but was subsequently pursued and shot. The next morning, at twenty minutes past seven, the great emancipator

was dead. The venom of the rebellion, concentrated in the breast of a cowardly assassin, had slain the noblest man of the age. No wonder that his death filled the land with horror, and that all the great nations of the earth paid a tribute of tears to his memory!

With the death of her distinguished husband the light of Mrs. Lincoln's life went out. "Her heart was broken," says Mr. Arnold, "and her mind so shattered by the shock that she was never quite herself thereafter." Henceforth, for some seventeen years, hers was a death in life, and none but the hard-hearted and inconsiderate will hold her to strict accountability for all the words that fell from her lips.

The qualities of Mr. Lincoln's mind and heart having been already emphasized, the young reader can not have failed to note that though he was manifestly a chosen instrument in the hands of Providence to guide this nation through a perilous crisis in its history, he was yet, in no mean sense, the architect of his own fortune. His endowments were God's gifts; their development was the result of his own tireless pursuit of self-culture under great difficulties. His moral qualities, and almost womanly sensibilities, were inherited largely from

his mother, but it was his own persistent choice that held them in subjection to the precepts of righteousness amid early associations which constantly tempted him to set them aside. His lot in life being unfavorable to his intellectual culture and social advancement, he resolutely made his own opportunities and industriously hewed out his own path to renown. In all this he appears to have cherished a profound trust in the providence of God, which led him to cast the care not only of his personal interests but also those of his country upon God. His views of spiritual truth and his spiritual experiences are not unfolded by his biographers, but only his habit of prayer and trust. Evidently he was profoundly impressed by ideas of human helplessness apart from God. And these ideas had very much to do with the greatness of his character and with his success in his professional and political career. If he was not a spiritually-minded man in the highest sense, he was, nevertheless, molded by the influence of Christian truth, which was the basis on which his character was builded.



JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

II.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

The Conscientious Statesman.

"The warrior, . . .
Who, if he rise to station or command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honorable terms, or else retire;
Who comprehends his trust, . . .
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honors, or for worldly state."

—WORDSWORTH.

THE town of Quincy, six miles from Boston, Massachusetts, is partly surrounded by high hills. On the 17th of June, 1775, a lady in middle life, and a bright, active boy, about eight years of age, were hastily climbing one of those hills which commanded a view of Boston. They were pale with excitement, as they might well be, seeing that the thunder of battle was booming through the air, and clouds of smoke were rolling up and obscuring the distant sky. On reaching the summit of the hill they were horror-struck to see

the city of Charlestown in flames, and to mark the quick flashes from musketry and cannon which pierced the smoke of the battle, then being fought on Bunker Hill, between the patriots of Massachusetts and the red-coated mercenaries of the British king.

That eager boy was John Quincy Adams, whose mother had led him out from their modest family mansion in Quincy village, then a parish of the town of Braintree, to watch the progress of that distant fight, which was the first regular battle of the war of independence. Young as he was, he had heard his patriotic father, John Adams, and his liberty-loving mother speak of England's tyranny over the colonies, and of the hope that time and patriotic valor would break the Briton's yoke and secure the blessing of self-government to the land they loved. Those parental lessons were burned too deeply to be forgotten into the boy's beating heart by the fire of battle on that memorable day, and by the subsequent military movements which ended in the retirement of the British from the city and port of Boston.

John Quincy Adams was a very precocious boy. He was born in Quincy, July 11, 1767. The times were troublous, and his early school advantages were, therefore, irregular and far from thorough.

Yet, when only ten years old, we find him writing to his father about one of Smollett's works which he was then reading, asking for some instructions and advice with regard to his studies, and expressing his "present determination of growing better." A year later we find him with his father in France, whither the latter had been sent by the Continental Congress, and, writing home to his "honored mamma," with a thoughtful gravity and a vein of sensible remark about himself and others far beyond his years.

His father sent him to schools at Paris, Amsterdam, and Leyden, as his occasions permitted. When he was only fourteen years old Francis Dana, American envoy to Russia, took him to that court as his private secretary. Subsequently his father took him to Paris as "an additional secretary," when, with Jefferson and Franklin, he prepared the papers that contained the terms of peace between Great Britain and this country. These employments, given him at an age when most lads shrink from sober thought and mental application, are proofs that, though by no means highly favored with scholastic training, his active mind had drunk in knowledge from such books as fell into his hands, from his observations of the conduct of

grave and dignified men, and from their official and social conversations, to which he was, no doubt, a thoughtful listener.

When he is seventeen years old his father is appointed American minister to the court of England. So great is his confidence in his son's judgment, that he bids him choose between a position on his diplomatic staff and his return to America for the purpose of going through a course of study at Harvard. The lad's decision marks the gravity and moral greatness of his character. He sees "immediate satisfaction" in a diplomatic circle, as he very naturally might, since it implied further association with distinguished men, introduction to the pleasures of gay society, and an easy, self-indulgent life. On the other side of the question, he sees subjection to the rules of a college for at least two years, made more difficult by his recent free life in Europe, with the prospect of a struggle of years before gaining such a position as that to which his ambition aspires. Weighing all these points with far-sighted wisdom, he finally decides for America and Harvard, because hope whispers that, with the "ordinary share of common sense," which he flatters himself is his possession, "he can live independent and free" in America. Assuredly this

lad of seventeen was prematurely wise and morally strong!

The extent and thoroughness of his previous, almost exclusive, self-education are visible in the fact that, after a brief period of close application, he gains admission to the junior class at Harvard; and when he is graduated, two years later, his standing is high and honorable. During the next three years he is a law student in the office of Theophilus Parsons, at Newburyport, Massachusetts. When twenty-three years old he is admitted to the bar. During his first year of professional life in Boston the calls of his clients are few and far between. His patience is, therefore, much tried by long wating, and he writes, "I still find myself as obscure, as unknown to the world, as the most indolent or the most stupid of human beings." The next year the calls of clients are more frequent. Boston begins to perceive the young lawyer's worth. After four years the demands for his services are sufficiently numerous to cheer his spirits, and to keep his purse comfortably replenished.

But it is not the destiny of this remarkable young man to spend his life in the comparative obscurity of a law office or of a city court-room. His powers fit him for a more conspicuous sphere,

and he soon finds entrance to that sphere, not by dishonorable self-seeking, but through the diligent exercise of his intellectual gifts and his political sagacity. During his days of somewhat impatient waiting for clients he had kept his fertile pen busy. First, he had written a reply to that wretched assault on truth, then recently published, miscalled "The Rights of Man," by Thomas Paine. Shortly after he had composed an able tractate on the neutrality of America in European wars. These papers he had published anonymously, but their exceptional merit soon attracted the attention of the best minds both at home and abroad. Inquiry led to the discovery of their author. General Washington saw in them the high qualities of the obscure lawyer, and, for this reason, as is supposed, nominated him "American Minister Resident at the Hague." The Senate unanimously confirmed the nomination; and, while our ambitious lawyer is meditating on the arrival of his twenty-seventh birthday, his commission is placed in his hands. Accepting this unsought place he quits Boston with characteristic promptness. The thirty-first day of October, 1794, finds him at the Hague, the capital city in Holland, where he is greeted by the noise and tumults caused by the opening of those great

French wars which were soon to drench the fields of Europe with blood.

The next eight years of his life are given to faithful diplomatic service, partly at the Hague, partly in Portugal, and partly at Berlin. The defeat of his father, John Adams, in his candidacy for election to a second presidential term causes his return to the United States in 1801. He then resumes his old place at the Boston bar. The next year the Federalists of Boston elected him to a seat in the State Senate. In that office he at once stood forth as a politician having convictions, and endowed with the moral courage to maintain them in defiance of party dictation. The "first act of his legislative life" was to "propose that the Federalist majority in the Legislature should permit the Republican (Democratic) minority a proportional representation in the council." This just measure was defeated by a party vote. It was too liberal for those illiberal times. It incensed the disgusted, but narrow minded, leaders of his party. Nevertheless, such was the commanding influence of his great political ability that, in 1803, despite their hostility, he was elected to the United States Senate.

Following him to Washington we see him in a very trying position. His party, the Federalist,

was in the minority, and this minority made him the butt of the fierce hatred they cherished against his father, with whom they had quarreled. In the language of Mr. John T. Morse, Jr.,* he was "the unpopular member of an unpopular minority." In his diary Mr. Adams says of his status in the Senate chamber: "I have nothing to do but to make fruitless opposition. . . . No amendments of my proposing will obtain in the Senate as now filled. . . . There are persons here who hate me more than they love any principle."

A weak man would have shrunk into himself, and become a nonentity under such treatment. But the character of John Quincy Adams had a tough, enduring strength rarely equaled, never excelled. He felt wounded by the insulting contempt of his brother senators, for his nature was acutely sensitive. But he was bravely self-possessed, conscientious, confident that he was aiming to do right, persistent, and patient. He was willing to work with his party when its measures harmonized with his own judgment, but not otherwise. He claimed the right of independent thought and free action. To him convictions were more authoritative than

*"John Quincy Adams," by John T. Morse, Jr., a work to which the writer of this sketch is much indebted.

party obligations. Such qualities being indications of a noble mind, are sure, in the end, to command the respect of thinking men. Hence, before his first term in the Senate closed, he had won a standing somewhat commensurate with his superior qualifications.

Grave international questions, growing out of the war then raging between France and Great Britain, and seriously affecting American commerce, disturbed the political life of the country at this time. The Federalists had strong Anglican sympathies; the Republicans (Democrats) were more in sympathy with the French. John Quincy Adams was neither French nor English, but thoroughly an American in his views and sympathies. Hence, when British outrages on American commerce were more vigorously resented by the "Republicans" than by the Federalists he voted with them, because he regarded their measures to be more truly patriotic than those of his own party. This noble independence cost him, in 1808, the loss of his seat in the Senate, and also of his social standing in Boston. His old Federalist friends in that aristocratically governed city trampled upon his reputation with spiteful demonstrations of personal disrespect, and, for a time, his outlook

for the future was thick with the gloom of a starless night.

Again, however, his worth triumphed. In 1809 President Madison, recognizing his diplomatic ability, nominated him as "Minister Plenipotentiary to Russia." The Senate, after first refusing, voted to confirm him, and, in the Autumn of 1809, we find him domiciled in St. Petersburg. The four and a half years he spent at the Russian court passed without incidents of special importance in his life. He was treated very cordially by the czar, who respected him very highly, and his influence tended to promote the friendly feeling of that potentate and of his people for America. In 1814 he was summoned to Ghent as one of the commissioners to negotiate the terms of peace between England and America. This difficult task successfully completed, he was transferred to London, as "American Minister at the British Court." His character and ability commanded the respect of that government. In 1817, being summoned home to take the post of secretary of state under President Monroe, he bade farewell to Europe and to the diplomatic service, to which he had devoted sixteen years of his life, and in which he justified the opinion of Washington, who had said, with prophetic fore-

sight, that "he would be found at the head of the diplomatic corps, be the government administered by whomsoever the people may choose."

His career as secretary of state was eminently honorable, and, despite the intrigues and personal ambitions of aspiring statesmen, successful. In settling grave international disputes which had arisen with Great Britain and with Spain, respecting boundaries, fisheries, commerce, neutrality, the suppression of the slave trade, etc., he maintained both the dignity and rights of America, finally securing settlements which, in the main, were satisfactory to the great body of the people. In his official intercourse with the representatives of foreign courts Mr. Adams sternly resented every attempt on their part to treat with America as with an inferior power. He insisted on the diplomatic equality of our infant republic with the old monarchies of Europe, thereby compelling a measure of respect from them which they conceded with evident reluctance.

During the secretarial career of Mr. Adams, the discussions which preceded the adoption of the Missouri Compromise Act revealed to him the determination of Southern politicians to make slavery, as far as possible, a national institution. He deeply regretted this "flagrant inconsistency" on the part of

men who, he sarcastically said, had "the Declaration of Independence on their lips and the merciless scourge of slavery in their hands." "Slavery," he said, "is the great and foul stain upon the North American Union, and it is a contemplation worthy of the most exalted soul whether its total abolition is or is not practicable. . . . A life devoted 'to this problem' would be nobly spent or sacrificed." These are grand words, worthy of both the statesman and moralist. They prove that his subsequent conflicts with the slave power in Congress had their origin, not in the discussions of the popular abolition movement, but in convictions which were rooted in his Christian consciousness, and in that forecasting sagacity which characterized his statesmanship.

It is claimed, with apparent conclusiveness, both by Charles Francis Adams, the editor of his Diary, and by Mr. Morse, his recent biographer, that Mr. Adams, and not President Monroe, was the first to assert what is now known as the "Monroe doctrine," viz., that "the American Continents are no longer subjects for any new European colonial establishments." This principle Mr. Adams avowed in his discussions with the Russian Government, some five months before President Monroe inserted it in his message to Congress, December 2, 1823.

The later years of his secretaryship were somewhat embittered by the intrigues, scandals, and cabals of aspirants for the presidential chair. As there were no great national questions at issue between the political parties at that time, the choice of a successor to Monroe was to be determined, not so much by the political principles of the candidates, as by their personal popularity. Therefore, the approaching election was preceded by the schemes of the candidates to soil the reputation and diminish the popularity of their rivals. Cliques were formed; specious aspersions were invented and spread abroad; promises of places were given to men of influence; underhand and unworthy, not to say malicious, methods were adopted to promote the chances of one and destroy those of another. During the last year of Mr. Monroe's administration the political life of the country was a troubled sea, casting up little else than mire and dirt.

The great abilities of Mr. Adams, as shown in his eight years of service as secretary of state, and in his long-continued diplomatic duties, naturally called public attention to him as the fitting successor of Mr. Monroe. As competitors he had Henry Clay, the brilliant popular orator; Andrew Jackson, the victorious hero of New Orleans; and

Mr. Crawford, secretary of the treasury, who was the most artful of political managers. These gentlemen had multitudes of personal friends, who toiled with unscrupulous zeal for their success. But Adams had few warmly attached friends. His nature was cold, his habits unsocial, his manners stiff and unbending, his virtues Puritanic, his speech severe, his antipathies many and strong, and his determination to abstain from all efforts, direct or indirect, to gain the office of President immovable. Said Mr. Everett to him one day:

"Are you determined, Mr. Adams, to do nothing to promote your election to the presidency as the successor of Mr. Monroe?"

"I shall do absolutely nothing, sir!" was his firm, grand response.

To this noble declaration he rigidly adhered. He laid no wires, used no persuasions, solicited no man's support, threatened no one, gave no pledges, conciliated no opponent. Beyond some slight increase of courtesy in his official and social intercourse he stood unflinchingly on this declaration: "If the people wish me to be President I shall not refuse the office, but I ask nothing from any man or from any body of men."

O noble, unselfish patriot! He was too frank and

true to conceal the fact that he should be pleased if elected, and chagrined if defeated. "Yet," said he, "if I am not elected, I shall construe it as the verdict of the people that they are dissatisfied with my services as a public man, and I shall then retire to private life, no longer expecting or accepting public functions."

Had some great principle involving the national weal or woe been at stake, Mr. Adams would probably have felt bound so far to modify his action as to make such *honorable* effort as he might to secure his election, not for his own, but for the principle's sake. But no such serious issue being involved, nothing being in the contest but the personal fitness of the candidate, he rightly left the people to judge him by his past great services. In this, who can affirm that he did more or less than patriotism could require of a high-minded, unselfish, conscientious man?

When the electoral college voted it was found that neither candidate was elected—albeit, Calhoun was elected Vice-president. General Jackson had ninety-nine votes, Adams eighty-four, Crawford forty-one, and Clay thirty-seven. Hence the election of President was in the hands of the House of Representatives. Clay hated Jackson, and his

friends, seeing their chief's case to be hopeless, therefore gave their support to Adams, who, consequently, was elected President, February 9, 1825.

Thus, when fifty-eight years of age, John Quincy Adams found himself in possession of the highest prize offered to the ambition of an American citizen. He had won it honorably. He had not, in fact, plucked it by dint of direct effort from the political tree, but it had fallen into his hands as the just reward of his long-continued, meritorious services for the Republic. He could, therefore, accept it without a pang of self-reproach. Nevertheless, he took it, not with the delirious joy of one to whom the possession of the office is a supreme end, but with a degree of dissatisfaction which none but a high-minded man could have felt. In his diary he wrote on the last day of December, 1825.

"The year . . . has witnessed my elevation . . . to the summit of laudable, or, at least, blameless, worldly ambition; not, however, in a manner satisfactory to pride or to just desire; not by the unequivocal suffrages of a majority of the people, with, perhaps, two-thirds of the whole people adverse to the actual result."

To a self-seeking politician these words must be unintelligible, because to him the office is every

thing, the mode of reaching it, and the verdict of the people on his personal merits of little comparative consequence. But to the acutely sensitive and just mind of Mr. Adams, conscious of the conscientious fidelity with which he had served his country, yet without winning the esteem of the people, whose interests he preferred to the honors and emoluments of office, such words were natural. Were they not also eminently honorable both to his intellect and heart?

We now see Mr. Adams in the presidential chair. His past official work furnishes good ground for believing that he "is equal to the need" of this exalted position. His administration, by resulting in the rapid development and rising importance of the country, justifies this popular faith. It was a wise, sagacious, strong, and beneficial administration. Yet, with all this in its favor, it was not, so far as Mr. Adams was personally concerned, a political success. His unbending uprightness in the bestowment of offices gave offense to his supporters, and enabled men engaged in corrupting intrigues in behalf of aspirants to his office, to undermine his administration. His purpose to govern with the single aim of promoting the weal of the country, and to put men in official positions, not for political service, but for their competency to fill them effect-

ively, was too inflexible to be endured by the selfish spirit of the age. There was not political virtue enough in the country to elect him a second time. Moreover, the Southern slave power was beginning to make itself a unit in behalf of the "peculiar institution," and it was instinctively hostile to Mr. Adams as a statesman whose opinions, both on moral and political grounds, were hostile to their policy. Besides all this, the President lived, not in the warm air of human sympathies and genial friendships, but in a cold atmosphere of duty, which chilled all who approached him. And though, as Daniel Webster wrote, "his measures were just and wise, and every honest man should have supported them" and him, yet many such men, repelled by his freezing manners, either withheld their support altogether, or gave it to him with such an utter lack of enthusiasm, that it failed to win adherents. Hence it came to pass, in the elections of 1829, that, owing to the apathy of the friends of Mr. Adams and the zeal of his opponents, Andrew Jackson, the rough, uncultivated, but heroic soldier, who had promised the "spoils" to the victors, triumphed over Adams, the cultivated, upright, enlightened, incorruptible statesman.

This severe blow to his prestige grieved the

good old man very deeply. Conscious of having devoted his life and faculties "to the Union and to the improvement, physical, moral, and intellectual, of his country," the ingratitude of the nation and the partisan spite of political opponents wounded him to the quick. And when his term expired he left Washington and retired to the home of his boyhood in Quincy, fully intending to live in retirement on his moderate means, and "to withdraw from all connection with public affairs."

"Man proposes, but God disposes," says the popular adage. For this doughty old statesman God had nobler work than the literary tasks which he now proposed to undertake. That haughty power, which had already sought to rule the policy of the government in the interests of slavery, was united and determined to nationalize the inhuman institution. A man of heroic mold, of fearless courage, of inflexible purpose, of large acquaintance with our political history, and of more than ordinary power in debate, was soon to be needed on the floor of Congress to defy that unscrupulous slave power, and to be the standard-bearer of the friends of freedom, whose voices were now beginning to be heard demanding liberty for the oppressed. John Quincy Adams was that needed

man, and, in 1830, the all-disposing Providence of God moved the citizens of Plymouth District, Massachusetts, to elect him as their representative in Congress. Thus the hour of freedom's battle and the man to fight it were brought into the required juxtaposition. Mr. Adams was about to enter upon the greatest, grandest work of his useful public life.

Mr. Adams, though not a pronounced abolitionist, was yet known to regard slavery as an immoral institution, hostile in spirit to the right development of the Republic. For this reason, he had no sooner taken his seat in Congress than petitions were placed in his hands from the friends of universal freedom, asking Congress to abolish slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia. Without hesitation he presented them, frankly stating that he should not support their prayer "for abolition in the district." Those petitions were referred to the "Committee on the District of Columbia" without a word of opposition. The slave power was not then aware of the undeveloped strength of the growing anti-slavery sentiment. But when, four years later, the movement for the annexation of Texas caused the people of the free States to give startled attention to the encroachments of that aggressive power, its supporters grew

defiant. They would not suffer the free North to touch their idol even with a petition. But the petitions came in ever-increasing numbers. Mr. Adams faithfully presented them. In 1836 Congress, after much debate, adopted "a gag law," by which all such petitions were to be conclusively tabled without being "either printed or referred." Nevertheless, petitions continued to be sent by hundreds, and year after year, with inexhaustible persistence, Mr. Adams boldly presented them, renewing, at the opening of each session, a motion to rescind the unconstitutional gag rule.

It is utterly impossible, in so brief a sketch as this, to give even a broad outline of the debates and scenes through which this peerless champion of the right of petition passed during his more than sixteen years of Congressional life. Never was a member of Congress more bitterly hated, more shamefully insulted, more scornfully treated, more ferociously baited than he. And never did a representative face his foes so defiantly, so courageously, so independently, so ably, so perseveringly, so eloquently as this truly great man. When he presented his petitions there were days on which the excited House literally foamed with rage against him. The eyes of his Southern enemies and their North-

ern allies flashed the fires of hate upon him, their lips curled with contempt and scorn, their voices fairly hissed with the madness of unsatisfied revenge, and their words fell on his ears like burning coals. And, to their shame, be it said, the representatives of the free States mostly left him to fight these unequal battles unaided by their sympathies, speeches, or votes. He was a combatant fighting, "substantially single-handed," against an overwhelming host.

But he was equal to the great occasion. To a spectator, unacquainted with his powers, his appearance awakened no confidence in his ability to cope with the fiery onslaughts of his many adversaries. He was low of stature. His figure was rotund, and by no means graceful. His eyes were inflamed and watery. His hands shook. His voice was high, shrill, piercing, unmusical, and at times broken. There was little rhetoric, and nothing imposing in his manner of speaking. He was not an orator as men usually interpret that term. Nevertheless, when he rose to reply to the assaults of his foes the House grew still with the interest of expectation. Master of himself, with a cool head, with an acute intellect full of information on the points in debate, "with his back set firm against a solid moral principle," he returned the blows of his adversaries

with a logic that confounded, a sarcasm that exasperated, and an earnestness that was born, not of his passions, but of his convictions. No wonder that men who beheld him, year after year, contending thus for the right of petition, until 1844, when he secured the repeal of the "gag rule," learned to call him, despite his lack of oratorical graces, "the old man eloquent." No wonder that, outside of that gladiatorial arena, this unconquerable man won hosts of admirers from among the friends of human liberty. What lover of moral grandeur in man could refuse his admiration to one who, after being insulted and brow-beaten by those angry Congressional brawlers in one of their prolonged debates, could reply to their threats of a trial and expulsion in these brave words:

"If they say they will try me, they must try me. If they say they will punish me, they must punish me. But if they say that in peace and mercy they will spare me expulsion, I disdain and cast away their mercy; and I ask them if they will come to such a trial and expel me. I defy them. I have constituents to go to who will have something to say if this House expels me. Nor will it be long before the gentlemen will see me here again."

This was not the language of mere bravado, but

of a man whose sublime courage reposed on a consciousness of his own integrity and of the righteousness of his cause. Mr. Adams was as much indebted to his unique, noble character as to his great abilities for the respect he finally won, even from his foes, and for the stronghold he ultimately gained on the confidence, not to say affection, of the friends of freedom throughout the country. His sincerity was as apparent as his courage, and could not be seriously questioned by any intelligent observer of his conduct, unless passion and prejudice had made him hopelessly blind. Who can help respecting a thoroughly honest man who has the courage of his convictions?

But the reader must not imagine that Mr. Adams was devoid of sensibility, nor that he passed through such fierce combats with the representatives of the slave power and their Northern auxiliaries without being grievously wounded by the envenomed darts so thickly hurled upon him. He was, in fact, acutely sensitive. He felt deeply. His long-continued isolation from the sympathies of Northern representatives was especially painful to him. And but for the support given him by the friends of freedom outside of Congress, even his imperial will might have given way before the hour of victory

arrived. This outside support, however, was less cordial than it ought to have been, because he steadfastly refused to advocate the extreme and, as he thought, untimely demands of the abolitionists. He chose to maintain the ground, not of an avowed abolitionist, but of the champion of the right of petition; albeit, his keen-eyed opponents perceived clearly enough that their slave system had no more determined adversary than he. Perhaps the dissatisfaction of the friends of freedom who did not fully understand him grieved him more deeply than the hatred of the slaveholders. But believing in his own rectitude, and in the wisdom of his course, he kept steadily on, offering petitions, a hecatomb at a time, fighting the gag rule, hurling his thunderbolts of arguments and sarcasm on the enemies of freedom, until, on the 3d of December, 1844, that infamous rule was rescinded by a vote of one hundred and eighty to eighty. Henceforth no man dared to resist the reception and reference of an anti-slavery petition. The persistent statesman had conquered. He went to his home that night in a grateful mood, and devoutly wrote in his inimitable diary these expressive words: "Blessed, forever blessed, be the name of God!"

It was not given to this soldier of freedom to do

much further service for the cause of emancipation. He had captured an important outwork. In doing it he had almost exhausted his physical energies. The burden of many years pressed heavily upon him. The hour of his departure drew nigh. Paralysis laid its leaden hand upon him in the latter end of 1846. On his recovering sufficiently to resume his duties in Washington, his re-appearance in the House was greeted with a spontaneous ovation. All the members rose as one man. Business was suspended, and he was ceremoniously conducted to his old seat by two representatives. The honest statesman, the old man eloquent, had manifestly conquered the prejudices even of his enemies, and compelled them, by the grandeur of his character, to pay voluntary tribute to his virtues and patriotism.

But his work was almost finished. Once more only was his voice heard in debate. On the 21st of February, 1848, he fell in his seat insensible. The House instantly adjourned. He was tenderly borne into the speaker's room. Medical men were called, but, in presence of the Master of Life, who had summoned him to a higher sphere of action, their skill was impotent. Some three hours after he was stricken down he uttered his final signifi-

cant words: "This is the last of earth!" Thenceforward he was unconscious, in which state he lay until the evening of the 23d, when he passed quietly away from the theater of his many conflicts for human freedom into the unknown abodes of the departed.

Thus did John Quincy Adams arrive at the end of his earthly existence; but the end of his influence is not yet reached. His unselfish patriotism, his incorruptible political virtue, his heroic struggle for free speech, his love of freedom, his independence of party dictation, his indefatigable devotion to duty, to self-culture, and to religious observances, are still living forces in the thought and feeling of his countrymen. To young men his example is eminently instructive, and should be strongly influential over their purposes and pursuits. His successful career teaches them not to expect success solely from their personal endowments, social relations, or favorable opportunities at the beginning of life, but from the right and diligent use of such conditions. Mr. Adams had all these things in his youth; nevertheless, he was the builder of his own fortune. By diligent study of men and books, by giving himself, not to the pursuit of place, pleasure, or gain, but to the duties which were succes-

sively assigned him, by doing whatever he found to do with his might, he grew in ability, in strength of character, in fitness for the higher and still higher places into which he was thrust, never through his own solicitation, but always by the acts of men who saw his worth demonstrated by irreproachable conduct. Suppose, instead of doing these things, he had been an idle, inattentive, pleasure-seeker in his early days, is it at all probable that he would have won either the presidential chair or that higher honor of a spotless reputation, based on a character, which was exceptionally grand and good? Nay. In the latter case he would have been, not the builder of a great life, but the destroyer of very superior opportunities. The fact, therefore, remains that the life of John Quincy Adams teaches the young men of to-day that very much of their destiny is in their own keeping. Providence has given them certain gifts and opportunities. It is their part to put them to such uses as will make them productive of beneficial returns.

There is also a lesson of caution to be learned from the life of Mr. Adams. Great and good as he was, his character was lacking in those genial qualities which win friendly regard. His nature was cold, and therefore not magnetic, but repellent.

His judgment of men was severe, and his hatred of meanness and corruption so intense that it stirred his naturally quick, hot temper into bitter and exasperating censures which stung their objects almost to madness. Hence his political opponents became his enemies, and those of his contemporaries who, because of their admiration of his high qualities, would have courted his personal friendship, were repelled. Hence he lived a life of remarkable self-isolation, albeit he mostly spent it in the unresting activity of diplomatic and political society. One can not well avoid attributing this isolation very largely to the fact that his religious life was rooted in his intellect and conscience more than in his affections. Had it found its chief home in his heart it would have given birth to those amenities of Christian love, those gentler emotions which win the affections as well as the confidence of others. It would have added the lovely graces of the Holy Spirit to the dignity of his intellect, made him the center of hosts of personal friends, softened the acrimony of his foes, and made his career, if not more successful, yet vastly less trying and vexatious to his heroic soul. This defect in our statesman's character is suggestive of the undeniable truth that no man, however richly endowed,

can climb to the pinnacle of human greatness without adding to his intellectual and moral culture those attractive graces which have their root in a heart filled with the love of Christ.

III.

AMOS AND ABBOTT LAWRENCE.

Two Honest Merchant Princes.

"Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

—JAMES SHIRLEY.

IN these speculative times, in which an unreasonable haste to be rich tempts young men to forsake the ancient paths of mercantile honor, and to adopt corrupt and corrupting methods for the swift acquisition of wealth, it is well for the young man just entering into business life to pause and study the characters of such merchant princes as that pair of noble brothers whose names stand at the head of this chapter. They were men whose successful career was based on the principle that "commerce is not a mercenary pursuit, but an honorable calling." And their vast business transactions were so conducted, from first to last, as to justify the Hon. Edward Everett in saying at the

funeral of Abbott, the younger brother, "I am persuaded, that if the dome of the state-house, which towers over his residence in Park Street, had been coined into a diamond, and laid at his feet as the bribe of a dishonest transaction, he would have spurned it like the dust he trod on. His promise was a sacrament."

These eloquent words, as descriptive of the elder as of the younger Lawrence, were spoken in presence of gentlemen who had long known them both. And they did not fall on their ears as empty sounds from the false lips of a flatterer, but as just tributes to a long mercantile career which was without a stain. The commercial men of Boston knew them to be true.

Amos and Abbott Lawrence were the sons of "good farmer people." Their parents, though not rich, were respectable, and were descended from a long line of reputable English ancestors. As far back as 1191 one of them, named Robert, displayed such chivalric courage while scaling the walls of Acre, in Syria, that Richard Cœur de Lion conferred upon him the honor of knighthood. In 1635 John Lawrence, the founder of the American branch of the family, came to Massachusetts with a company of Puritans, and settled, first in Watertown, and

subsequently in Groton. In this latter town the Lawrences continued as prosperous and highly respected tillers of the soil from generation to generation. And on the family farm in Groton the subjects of this sketch were born; Amos, the elder brother, on the 22d of April, 1786, and Abbott, the fifth brother in the family, on December 16, 1792. The early years of both were spent in the ancestral homestead, which appears to have been made comfortable by the father's industry, and happy through the abounding affection of the mother and the religious spirit which reigned supreme over the household. Both boys enjoyed the benefits, first of the district school, and later on of the Groton Academy, until they were about fourteen years old. They were then taken from school and sent from home to begin their battle with the difficulties of active life. Thus, you see, that neither of them was very greatly favored in boyhood with opportunities for intellectual culture. Both left the home of their childhood very superficially educated, without pecuniary means, and with no prospects of any position beyond what they might be able to attain by the honorable and diligent use of their own capabilities.

Yet, though destitute of pecuniary resources,

and of the power which is developed by thorough education, they were not wholly without the best elements necessary to success. Better than inherited wealth was that ancestral blood, untainted with dishonor, which flowed in their veins. More valuable still were the sound principles, the pure examples, the Scriptural instructions, and the religious training given them by their yeoman father and their housewifely, affectionate mother. These constituted the warp and woof which made it possible for these boys to weave a manly and noble character if they so willed. And, as we shall presently see, they did so will. By resolutely coining right principles into right actions from the start, they speedily attained a character, out of which blossomed the fair reputation which started them on their unbroken career of mercantile prosperity.

We will now fix our attention on Amos, who was taken from Groton Academy when little more than thirteen years old, and placed as clerk in a country store at Dunstable, Massachusetts. The lad's health had never been good; his weak constitution unfitted him for the rough manual labor of the farm. For that reason he was set to selling the thousand and one varieties which in those days constituted the stock in trade of a thriving, well-

situated country store. He was transferred from the quiet fields of his father to a busy store which, being on a great and much-traveled road, leading from Boston to Canada, was much frequented, not by the citizens of Dunstable only, but also by travelers on the numerous old-fashioned stages constantly passing to and fro. Amos, whose poor health had often kept him out of school, had been a thoughtful, observant boy, given to reading, and he no doubt found much food for reflection in the reports of travelers and their comments thereupon. The business of the store was large and brisk. It was not, like many country stores, a spot of dull stagnation, but a place of much lively conversation. Hence, while the hands of the bright farmer's boy were kept busy putting up merchandise, his mind was also kept alive and growing.

Young Lawrence, instead of shrinking from his tasks, as many boys do, entered cheerfully and heartily into his duties. Such were his aptitudes for business, his truthfulness and fair dealing, his obvious integrity, and such the force of his character that, in less than two years, though there were several clerks in the store, he had become the real head of the business. Thus, while yet an almost penniless apprentice, he was unconsciously laying

the foundation, strong as adamant, on which his prosperity was subsequently built.

An important and interesting fact will show you how he wrought upon the work of character building. In his youth the habit of drinking alcoholic liquors was almost universal. Few thought of it as being either wrong or dangerous. Most persons thought their use necessary to health. In conformity with this general custom Amos Lawrence's employer furnished his clerks every morning, for lunch, with a drink compounded of rum, raisins, sugar, nutmeg, etc. Only four weeks after entering the store the boy noticed that as the hour for taking this tempting drink approached, he felt a strong longing for it. Suspecting this appetite to be a source of danger, fearing that it might grow into a habit too strong to be controlled, he said to himself one day, "I won't take that drink again for a week." This promise he kept, renewing it at the end of the week by saying, "I won't take it for a month." His next promise was for a year, and after that he said, "I won't take it so long as I am an apprentice." These promises were all faithfully kept; albeit it was his daily task to mix the drink, and his refusal to taste it subjected him to the jests, the taunts, and even the censures of his associates, and of all the

frequenters of the store. And, it may be added, that as he treated alcoholic drink so, also, he treated tobacco. He ceased to use it because he saw that it tended to evil.

In this crucial experience the reader can see how the noble character of Amos Lawrence was built up. It was a conflict between his appetite on one side, with his conscience and will on the other. His will took the side of his conscience, and refused submission to the dictates of his appetite. And it was by a similar alliance between his will and his conscience against every wrong appetite, impulse, and propensity, that his character grew into dignified strength, beauty, and uprightness. Thus his intentions, enlightened by his early instruction at the hearthside, and aided by God's grace, had led him into the path by which all truly good men attain excellence, honor, and heaven.

His apprenticeship honorably ended, behold him, in the month of April, 1807, on his way to Boston with his whole fortune of twenty dollars in his pocket. He is going thither to see if he can establish a credit with some Boston house sufficient to start a business for himself and a fellow clerk in his native town. With those twenty dollars he feels rich, but is scarcely conscious that he has within

himself a possession that is far greater riches than the colossal fortune which he is destined to acquire—namely, his *character*. Yet so it was; and it was either through his reputation, gained in Dunstable, or by the impression made by his character in conversation that he was offered a clerkship in an old mercantile house. With the wisdom of a practical mind he accepted this offer, and remained in Boston.

His business abilities were so obvious to his new employers that, after a very short time they proposed to admit him to their partnership. A flattering offer, truly; but, to their great surprise, he promptly declined it. Their surprise would have been greater had they known that his reason for declining was his discovery that they were not conducting their business on sound principles. Yet such was his reason, and their disastrous failure, a few months later, proved the shrewdness of his judgment and the wisdom of his action.

A few months in a city is a brief period in which to gain a reputation sufficient to enable a young man fresh from the country to obtain credit enough to stock a store with merchandise. Yet this is what our young merchant did when he became a dry-goods merchant in Cornhill, Boston.

His success at first was not brilliant, his profits

for the first year amounting to only fifteen hundred dollars. The second year they were four thousand dollars. The times were not favorable for business, but by strict economy, by keeping accurate accounts of purchases and sales, by caution in buying, by selling for cash only, by strict integrity in every transaction, and by attention to details, he managed not only to live, but also to gradually enlarge his business into one of greater and growing dimensions.

About a year and a half after Amos went to Boston he was joined by his brother Abbott, then fifteen years old. This lad, destined to win "distinction both as a merchant and a statesman," entered his brother's store "with his bundle under his arm and less than three dollars in his pocket!" A beggarly outfit, surely; but, like Amos, the boy had a good and strong character for his capital. He was duly apprenticed to his elder brother, who, with a consciousness of the superiority of an elder brother, said of him, "A first-rate business man he was, but, like other bright lads, needed the careful eye of a senior to guard him from the pitfalls that he was exposed to." This naive assertion of seniority provokes a smile when one remembers that the patronizing senior was himself scarcely twenty-two summers old. One readily excuses it, however,

when one recollects that in thoughtful gravity young Amos Lawrence was already as mature as a man in middle life.

Abbott proved so good a pupil and so faithful an apprentice that, in 1814, Amos generously admitted him into partnership, not on niggardly terms, but "on equal shares." In spite of the perilous embarrassments to trade, occasioned by the embittered relations of this country with England and by actual war, Amos had so prospered that he was able to put "fifty thousand dollars into the concern." But only three days after the co-partnership papers were signed threatening war news from Europe caused a great fall in goods. The brothers had a heavy stock on hand, bought at high prices. Ruin stared them in the face. Abbott was profoundly discouraged. His more experienced brother retained his courage, however, and seeing the anguish of his disheartened junior partner, said to him: "If you are afraid we shall be wrecked, I am not. If you desire it, I will cancel our agreement, give you your note, and pay you five thousand dollars for your services at the end of the year."

To this noble offer Abbott replied, "No. You will lose more than that. Having enlisted with you, I will stand by you and do the best I can."

This manly courage had its reward. The rare skill of Amos piloted their imperiled business bark safely through the tempestuous period. Many commercial houses were wrecked, but that of Amos and Abbott Lawrence outlived the storm, and when peace was established in 1815 it was strong, both in itself and in public confidence. Honorable conduct, rare business ability, conscientious refusal to do business on a speculative basis, and superior commercial forecast had enabled it not merely to live, but also to enter vigorously on a career of enviable and sure prosperity.

Abbott went to Europe to represent their house in the first ship that sailed from America at the close of the war. He was then only two and twenty years old, but his movements in the English markets were so rapid, and his purchases so judicious, that Amos wrote him: "I really feel a little proud, my dear brother, of your conduct." It was evident to him that Abbott, like himself, was gifted with a genius for commercial life.

When Amos Lawrence was twenty-five years old he was married to Miss Sarah Richards, a lady who had been the playmate of his childhood, and was an intimate friend of his sisters. The following extract from a letter to his sister shows that, in

choosing this lady for his wife, he was attracted to her, not by merely superficial accomplishments, but by her noble qualities of mind and heart. Here are his golden words:

"Here I can not but observe the infinite advantage of good sense and good principles over the merely elegant accomplishments of fashionable education. By the latter we may be fascinated for a time, but they will afford no satisfaction in retrospection. The former you are compelled to respect and to love. Such qualities are possessed by Sarah."

O wise merchant! He chose his wife as he did his goods. In buying the latter he sought quality, not appearance only; and it was the high mental and pure moral qualities which constitute the true woman that attracted him to the lady who became his wife. Were all marriages formed on this principle of selection unhappy homes would be rare exceptions. Unfortunately for Amos Lawrence this admirable woman fell a victim to consumption in 1819, "leaving her husband overwhelmed with grief," and plunging him into the gloomy depths of despondency, from which he escaped by taking an extensive tour through Virginia and the Middle States. New scenes and the stirring disputations of the times at length diverted his thoughts and

restored his mind to its wonted cheerfulness. After two years spent as a widower he took Mrs. Nancy Ellis, the widow of Judge Ellis, to wife. This second choice was also wisely made. The lady was wealthy, the marriage was eminently happy, and during the twenty years invalidism which clouded Mr. Lawrence's later life, she was his faithful, affectionate, self-sacrificing companion and counselor.

This pair of noble brothers, acting on the same lofty business principles, continued to push their business with energy, sound judgment, and success, until they became the leading importers of Boston. When New England began to manufacture, their house zealously pushed her wares into the market, and from 1830 became largely interested as proprietors in the great mills of Lowell and other towns. Thus their business grew into vast proportions, and their income became princely. Both brothers were gifted with an "intuitive insight into the characters of men," with sound judgment, and an openness of character which won favor on the slightest acquaintance, and acquired the confidence of the community in the highest degree. Hence they made few mistakes. They ran risks, of course, but only such as naturally arise out of the changeful nature of human circumstances. Of the uncer-

tainties of modern speculation, caused by the gambling practices of the various exchanges of the day, they had little experience, since both brothers conscientiously abstained from all such speculations. Both of them acted on the theory expressed in the following letter, written by Amos when he was traveling, to Abbott, who was running the business at home:

"When I see how people in other places are doing business, I feel that we have reason to thank God that we are not obliged to do as they do, but are following that regular and profitably safe business that allows us to sleep well of nights, and eat the bread of industry and quietness. The more I see of the changes produced by violent speculations, the more satisfied I am that our maxims are the only true ones for a life together. Different maxims may prove successful for a part of life, but will frequently produce disastrous results, just at the time we stand most in need—that is, when life is on the wane and a family is growing around us."

Another principle which guided these great merchants was finely put by Abbott Lawrence to Edward Everett who, when about to address a mercantile association, had asked him, "What shall I say to the young men?"

"Tell them," said Mr. Lawrence, "that commerce is not a mercenary pursuit, but an honorable calling."

Well could Mr. Lawrence afford to say this, since his firm had been built upon "the adamantine basis of probity—beyond reproach, beyond suspicion."

It is no cause for wonder that the house of Amos and Abbott Lawrence stood unmoved when political and social changes shook the financial foundations of other firms, and toppled them in hopeless ruin to the ground. And young men of to-day do well to reflect, that nothing can long endure which is not founded on the divinely-appointed foundation of probity, honor, and unselfishness. God and nature are hostile to every structure that is built on the sinking sand of selfishness.

Men of such conspicuous success and exalted character could not fail to attract public attention as persons fitted to perform valuable political service. Accordingly, though averse to political activity and associations, Mr. Amos Lawrence was elected, in 1821, without his own co-operation, to a seat in the Massachusetts Legislature. The duties of this office he performed with eminent practical ability, but failed to acquire any taste for political life.

Abbott, however, though never specially devoting himself to politics, took great interest in political questions, and displayed uncommon ability for public duties. Hence, without seeking the honor, he was elected to Congress in 1834, and again in 1839. In 1842 he represented Massachusetts in the Commission on the Northeastern Boundary, and contributed very essentially to the peaceful solution of the vexed questions therein involved. In 1849, under President Taylor, he went to England as United States minister to that court. In this exalted and difficult position he achieved a success so decided and conspicuous that, says Mr. Freeman Hunt, "it may be doubted whether, since the mission of Dr. Franklin, any minister of the United States has accomplished a diplomatic success greater than must be awarded to Mr. Lawrence."

The remarkable feature of his success is, that it was the legitimate fruit of self-culture, of lofty character, and honorable conduct. This farmer's son, with scant school education, by diligent reading in spare hours, and by close observation of men whom he met in business circles, had fitted himself to move with dignity in the aristocratic circles which adorned the court of England. By the transparent purity of his character he commanded their

respect. Untainted by the Machiavelianism of diplomacy he proved himself the equal of men trained to diplomatic duties, and by straightforward executive skill he secured for his country all that her honor and interest demanded at a very critical period in her history. Thus, by a diligent use of originally limited opportunities Abbott Lawrence won high and honorable standing among the great men of his day.

Possibly his brother Amos, had he retained vigorous health, might have overcome his aversion to the duties of political life, and have won distinction as a legislator or diplomat. But, after the 1st of June, 1831, his ill health cut him off from further solicitation in that direction. On that day, while busy in his counting-room, he took a drink of cold water. Alarming illness seized him. His stomach had become suddenly and permanently disordered. For many days he was thought to be on the margin of the grave. From this perilous state he partially rallied, but was doomed to be more or less of an invalid to the day of his death. From this time the business of the great mercantile establishment, created and thus far principally guided by his genius, was chiefly managed by his noble and efficient brother. And, inspired by the spirit of

his Divine Master, Amos henceforth gave much of his thought and time to making such a use of his large wealth and of his still vigorous intellectual powers "as would promote the welfare of his fellow creatures."

How grandly he gave appears in the fact that, during the last twenty-four years of his life, his gifts amounted to the magnificent sum of six hundred and thirty-nine thousand dollars, "more than five-sixths of which," he said, "was applied in making other people feel happy; and it is no trouble to find objects for all I have to spare." Much, though not most, of this princely sum was given to educational institutions. Mr. Lawrence aimed to be both wise and liberal in his splendid charities.

With such benevolent work in his willing hands, and with established habits of reading, reflection, and prayer, it is not surprising that, despite his sufferings, he grew old gracefully. How could the spirits of such a large-minded man flag? That he retained his cheerfulness and enjoyment of life to the last is proven, among other evidences, by a letter he wrote when near his end, in which he said: "My life has been protracted beyond all my friends' expectations, and almost beyond even my own hopes, yet I enjoy the days with all the zest

of early youth, and feel myself a spare hand to do such work as the Master lays before me." This, from a man sixty-seven years old, who had not dared to eat a full meal for fifteen years, is assuredly proof demonstrative that his heart had learned to drink of that divine fountain which springs up to everlasting life.

Amos Lawrence passed out of the present life on the morning of the last day of the year 1852. After family devotions he retired to his bed the previous evening, asking his attendant about the welfare of a poor family which he had recently aided. His wife looked in upon him shortly after, and found him lying peacefully and apparently breathing out a silent prayer. Two hours later a paroxysm of his accustomed pain caused the family to rise to his aid. The pain fled before the usual remedies, and his spirit soon fled also. "He quietly breathed his last without having awakened to consciousness after his first sleep." He gave no sign in dying. It was not needed. His honorable, pure, religious, charitable life had already taught the world to know him as a Christian—the highest style of man.

Abbott Lawrence survived his brother nearly three years. After his return from the British

court in 1852 he pursued his business as before, expending liberal sums on various objects of charity and education. Like his brother, he was a princely giver. In recognition of his interest in the cause of scientific education the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred on him by both Harvard University and Williams College. In June, 1855, he was seized with a sickness which terminated his life on the 18th of the following month, he being then in the sixty-third year of his age.

All Boston was moved to grief by his death, as it had been when his brother died three years before. The public demonstrations were more marked, however, in his case because of his more public relations to the State. He was known not only as a great merchant and a liberal giver, but also as a statesman whose dignity of character and judicious diplomacy had honored his country abroad. Hence, public feeling sought expression at a vast gathering in Faneuil Hall, through the lips of such orators as Messrs. Stevenson, Robert C. Winthrop, and Edward Everett. On that impressive occasion, after speaking in detail of his many public and private virtues, Mr. Stevenson said: "The corner-stone of his character was a firm religious belief. He was a devout Christian, and an unshaken Christian

faith supported him after the hope of a longer life here was gone."

Mr. Winthrop, among many other eulogistic words, said: "He had become, at the hour of his death, the most important person in our community. . . . His name was a tower of strength to every good cause, and it was never given to a bad one."

Edward Everett, speaking of his truthful nature, said that, when the departed merchant was considering President Taylor's offer of the mission to England, he had consulted him. Among his other questions he had asked him whether there was any real foundation for the ancient epigrammatic jest that "an ambassador is a person sent to a foreign government to tell lies for his own," adding, that "if that was the case his mind was made up; he had never yet told a lie, and was not going to begin at the age of fifty-six." . . . "I will say of him," said Everett, "what was said of his lamented brother Amos, that every day of his life was a blessing to somebody."

It rarely happens that two brothers are so nearly like images cast in the same mold as were these noble merchants. In their love of active employment, in business tact, in executive force, in their cautious, yet enterprising, mercantile judgment, in immov-

able adherence to the loftiest business principles, in that personal power which invites the confidence of other men, in probity, in benevolence, and in public spirit they so nearly resembled each other that their lives, though so intimately related, flowed smoothly, side by side, like quiet streams, undisturbed by impeding rocks or dashing falls. Their harmony was unbroken by any unfraternal discords. "Lovely and pleasant in their lives," they were divided only for a brief period by death. Being both Christians, the religious faith that molded their lives and gave such moral elevation to their vast business enterprises, also gave them that "right to the tree of life," which is guaranteed by the promise of the Father to every one who believes in the Son. And, in these days of rampant speculation, when the commercial life of the country is so sapped by the subtle, yet daring, spirit of corruption, that honest men find it difficult to maintain their principles and thrive, the example of these noble brothers is worthy to be studied and imitated. To the young business man it is an incentive to a determination to reap no profit that is tainted with even the odor of dishonesty, and to prefer small gains, made by honorable dealing, to great riches dishonorably won, seeing that we have divine

authority for believing that, despite appearances to the contrary, "Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right." Besides this consideration, is another—namely, that it would be a noble ambition for any young Christian merchant so to use his business gifts as to despise existing speculative methods, and to demonstrate to his generation that it is still possible to repeat the experiences of the Lawrence brothers and to secure great revenues by righteousness.

IV.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE,

The Popular Author.

"Now I look back, and meadow, manse, and stream
Dimly my thought defines.
I only see—a dream within a dream—
The hilltop hearsed with pines.
I only hear above his place of rest
Their tender undertone,
The infinite longings of a troubled breast,
The Voice so like his own."

—LONGFELLOW.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE'S claim to a place among men of renown rests on his merits as a writer of fiction. The literary world has, by general consent, given him high rank among novelists. His works show that he was not a mere imitator, but a man whose genius was both original and unique. To the earnest Christian who views life as too real, earnest, and fateful a thing to be spent in idle brooding over the imaginary scenes and fanciful characters of the ordinary novel, the fact that a man excels as a writer of fiction is not, of

itself, a very high commendation. But since, in these days of almost universal reading, men will read works of imagination, and since it is a fact that many such works are vile in conception and corrupting in influence, such a man can consistently pay tribute of respectful commendation to the author who not only keeps his pages clean from stains of impurity, but also breathes into them the spirit of manliness and virtue. These moral merits are claimed for the writings of Mr. Hawthorne by his admirers. The charm of his fine, but singular, personal character is impressed on his productions. What his character was, how it was formed, the circumstances which influenced the direction of his genius, and the principal incidents of his public and private life are briefly outlined in this sketch.

Salem, Massachusetts, was the birthplace of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Descended from respectable ancestors of good Puritan blood, he came into the world on the 4th of July, 1804. Four years later his father died, after which event he, with his mother and two sisters, found a pleasant home beneath the hospitable roof of Mr. Manning, his maternal grandfather. There his child-life seems to have been happily spent, very little other than moral restraint being thrown around him. After his ninth

year the family spent considerable time on his grandfather's estate near Sebago Lake, in Maine. Their life there was simple, free, and gladsome. Subsequently, the boy went to school in Salem, where, with the aid of tutors, he was fitted for college. When nearly eighteen, he entered Bowdoin College, in Maine, displaying, while there, no remarkable abilities, yet graduating creditably in 1825. Writing of his college career, he said: "I was an idle student, negligent of college rules and the Procrustean details of academic life, rather choosing to nurse my own fancies than to dig into Greek roots and be numbered among the learned Thebans."

This honest confession, properly interpreted, gives the key to his intellectual qualities. His mind was not inclined, had a distaste, indeed, to that close application to the details of learning which is necessary to superior scholarship. Hence he was, as he says, "an idle student," but not, by any means, a mental idler. He was given to meditative musings while yet a boy. His imagination, not his reasoning powers, was his busiest faculty. He was a quiet, thoughtful observer of what he saw and heard; he looked much deeper into things than the average youth was able to do. This insight quickened his fancy and prompted him to build

mental castles and construct imaginary scenes and characters. He was, also, from his early boyhood, an omnivorous reader, fond of Bunyan's Pilgrim, Shakespeare's immortal dramas, poetry, and light literature. With these habits of mind it is not difficult to perceive that when he chose authorship as his profession he very naturally drifted, not into the ranks of historians, philosophers, or essayists, but into a place among writers of fiction.

Mr. Julian Hawthorne, his son and biographer, states a fact which shows that, while yet a young man, he gave close attention to the direction his character was taking. A lady, in whose home he frequently took tea, said to him one evening: "Now, Mr. Hawthorne, I am going to play Mrs. Thrale to your Johnson. I know you are a slave to my tea."

To this playful compliment Hawthorne made no response. But it led him to note that he had learned to use the good lady's excellent tea as an indulgence, and that he was, in truth, becoming its thrall. Shrinking with manly dread from the thought of enslavement to that or any other sensuous appetite, he resolutely abstained from tea drinking for the next five years. It was by this and similar acts of self-control that his character

acquired strength and beauty. Had his standard of action been more emphatically spiritual, and more radical in its ethics than it was, this habit of self-subjugation to his convictions would have made him an eminently religious man, and an author whose pen would have illustrated not only the morals, but also the life of the glorious Gospel of the Son of God.

There was nothing in Mr. Hawthorne's young life that suggested either to himself or to his friends, that he was endowed with more than an average measure of literary ability—nothing that promised more than a fairly successful career. Celebrity as a writer was not in his brightest day dreams. The first fruits of his pen, consisting of numerous tales, which found their way into annuals, magazines, and reviews, though well received by the public, and highly appreciated by his literary friends, did not awaken expectation that he was destined to take a high rank among the foremost writers of his times. Neither did they bring him very abundant golden rewards. When added to the income from his small property, the pecuniary fruits of his intellectual work still left him a comparatively poor man. Not until some time after his marriage did he have reason to hope that his genius

contained the "promise and potency" of a modest competence and of high literary reputation.

In 1837, the year in which many of his "Tales" were collected into a volume entitled, "Twice Told Tales," Hawthorne, feeling that his literary habits and work "had failed to put him into vital and tangible relations with the world," became desirous of some active employment, other than literary. On learning of this desire George Bancroft, then serving as collector at Boston, procured him an appointment as weigher and gauger in the Boston custom-house. His work in this humble office could have scarcely been congenial to his dainty tastes and love of seclusion. But his strong will kept him at his grimy tasks among the rough workmen and bluff seamen on the wharves through two years. Then a change in the administration at Washington led to his dismissal in 1841. If his official life contributed but little to his fortune, it at least made him "practically acquainted with the sons of toil." Possibly, with a relish for manual labor, it had also begotten a desire for fellowship with minds of a higher grade and culture than he had met with on the wharves of Boston. Be this as it may, we find him investing a portion of his savings in the somewhat celebrated Brook Farm community, an organ-

ization of cultivated minds aiming at a communal life combining self-support by manual labor with mental culture and communion of philosophical thought. As is well known, the community failed, as all similar institutions have done, and, probably, always will, so long as human nature is self-willed. Hawthorne quitted it in 1842. He carried away with him some slight acquaintance with the duties of a farmer, but left the greater part of his savings sunk beyond recovery in the insolvent concern. Nevertheless, his connection with it was not, in the end, financially unprofitable; for, while there, he was, perhaps unconsciously, laying up materials for his popular "Blithedale Romance," which he produced ten years later.

In 1842 Mr. Hawthorne was married to Miss Sophia Peabody, a lady to whom he had been secretly engaged for the previous three years. Their reason for keeping their engagement secret was not because their marriage was a misalliance on either side, for their families were socially equal and mutually friendly; but Miss Sophia was a chronic invalid, the victim of what was apparently an incurable nervous headache. Fearing that Mr. Hawthorne's mother would object to the marriage for this seemingly sound reason, and unwilling to grieve

the stately old lady, they had not revealed the fact of their engagement—albeit, unknown to them, Madame Hawthorne's feminine instinct had divined, not their mutual affection only, but also their engagement. And when she was told it at last, instead of objecting, she cordially approved it.

The singular feature of Hawthorne's courtship was, that it conditioned their proposed marriage on her recovery from an invalidism which had lasted twenty years. "If God intends us to marry," she said, with great good sense, to her wooer, "he will let me be cured, if not, it will be a sign that it will not be best."

Her cure was by no means likely. But, says their biographer, "the lovers were justified in believing that Love himself was their physician. When Sophia Peabody became Sophia Hawthorne, in 1842, she was, for the first time since her infancy, in perfect health; nor did she ever afterwards relapse into her previous condition of invalidism."

The pathological and psychological mystery of this remarkable cure who can solve? But there is no mystery in the causes that made their marriage a peculiarly happy one. Their son Julian says: "No cloud or change ever passed over their affection, even for a moment; but every succeeding year

found their union more exquisitely complete." This is saying much, very much—perhaps it is the language of filial exaggeration. Nevertheless, whoever reads such of the letters which passed between them during their engagement, as are found in their biography, will discover in their purity, delicacy, tenderness, sweetness, reverence, and dignified sentiment the causes of their unusually, if not perfectly, happy married life. They were matched as well as married. Though differing in their intellectual qualities, their noble characters were tuned to one harmonious key. Mrs. Hawthorne, sometime after their marriage, wrote to her mother, saying: "In perfect high (marriage) union there is no question of supremacy. Souls are equal in love and intelligent communion. . . . There is never a question of private will between us, but of absolute right." In these sentences the reader has the true solution of the problem of the married happiness of Hawthorne and his wife. With them as with all others, where there is love sufficiently strong and intelligent to substitute absolute right for personal will as the standard of action, happiness must abide as an angel in the household.

The four years succeeding their marriage were spent by Mr. and Mrs. Hawthorne in the quiet vil-

lage of Concord, Massachusetts. There his contributions to periodical literature, subsequently collected into a volume entitled, "Mosses from an Old Manse," were his main reliance for their scanty support. Their habits were very economical, yet the niggardly prices paid for his delightful stories scarcely sufficed to keep the wolf of poverty from their door. In this emergency his friends interested themselves, and procured him the appointment of surveyor in the Salem custom-house, with a salary of twelve hundred dollars a year. Consequently, he removed from the rural quietude of Concord to the bustling little city of Salem. The duties of his new office he fulfilled with conscientious fidelity for some four years—albeit, to one so indisposed to mingle with ordinary men, and so given to mental creations as he was, they must have been distasteful, and therefore burdensome. But even inflexible official fidelity is lighter than down when blown upon by the breath of detraction, issuing from the mouth of political rivalry. Hence, this utterly unworldly and unsuspicious man was confounded, when told one day that he had been dismissed from his office chiefly for political reasons, though moral ones were privately and falsely alleged, and his successor appointed. It mattered not that

every allegation was utterly groundless, and that signatures to the petition which asked his office for another had been surreptitiously obtained, he would not take active measures to wash out their calumnies, and therefore his enemies triumphed. So far as the office was concerned time took care of his fair reputation, and showed it white as freshly fallen snow.

On the day of his removal he went home much earlier than had been his wont. His wife promptly expressed her pleasure at seeing him back so soon. The dejected husband replied that he had left his official head behind him, and that he was no longer surveyor.

Then, in cheerful tones, his good wife rejoined: "O, then you can write your book!"

Hawthorne had been for some time spending his leisure hours planning a book, and bemoaning his lack of opportunity to push it to completion. His wife's ready reference to those regrets brought a sad smile to his lips as he said: "Yes, but it would be agreeable to know where our bread and rice are coming from while I am writing."

His wife stepped to her desk, opened a drawer, and showed him no inconsiderable pile of gold coins. He had been in the habit of giving her a weekly sum for the expenses of the household.

She, by her judicious economy, had contrived to save part of that money. There it lay, a glittering heap, ready to meet the unexpected crisis in their affairs, and to enable him to go on with the book which was to make him famous, and to put an end to their pecuniary embarrassments. "So," writes his son, "he began 'The Scarlet Letter' that afternoon, and blessed his stars, no doubt, for sending him such a wife."

Human afflictions sometimes come in groups. In Hawthorne's case it was so in 1849. The loss of his office implied the cutting off of his needed income and many anxious cares respecting pecuniary affairs. Next came the illness and death of his mother, consuming much of the time he needed to write for bread, and increasing his life-burden by throwing upon him the responsibility of providing, at least in part, for his sisters. But he bore bravely up. After the death of his mother he "wrote immensely," and before his removal to Lenox in the Spring of 1850, besides much writing for periodicals, he had put the finishing touches to the fascinating story which proved to be his stepping-stone to literary fame.

The immediate and decided success of "The Scarlet Letter" operated as an invigorating tonic

to his jaded mind, and the mountain breezes of Berkshire had a similar good effect on his over-strained nervous system. Had it proved a failure, or only a partial success, it is not unlikely that he would have sunk into hopeless despondency. I do not find evidence in his correspondence that he had that strong personal trust in God which is the source of elastic strength to minds deeply imbued with evangelical faith. He was, doubtless, a decided theist, and had an unequivocal intellectual belief in the divine goodness. But with the "faith that sweetly works by love" he does not appear to have had an experimental acquaintance. Hence he had to stand in his own strength, and bear his burdens without that consciousness of having the "everlasting arms" about and beneath him, which comes to none but those by whom God is seen as the Father of the Lord Jesus.

The applause of the reading world, both of America and England, sweeping over his wearied mind like strains of triumphal music, cheered his sinking spirits. The rapid sale of "The Scarlet Letter" replenished his shrunken purse. As soon as the heat of Summer gave place to the early Autumn breezes he resumed his charming pen. Five months of unresting toil produced that weird

story—"The House of the Seven Gables." Its appearance in March, 1851, was greeted with unstinted praise. Those readers who had followed with breathless interest the sad fortunes of the proud, unhappy, much-enduring Hester, and the terrible mental conflicts of the penitent Dimmesdale in "The Scarlet Letter," now entered into delighted sympathy with the sunny spirit of the Phebe, and the charming pathos of old Uncle Venner in "The House of the Seven Gables." His friend, James Russell Lowell, thought the "House" a great triumph, in that it had deepened and widened the impression made by his first very successful romance. He considered it, he said, "the most valuable contribution to New England history that has been made." That the popular judgment of its merits was as favorable as that of his literary friends, was at once shown by a great demand for the book. Having proved by it that the resources of his genius were not limited to a first successful book, both his fame and fortune were assured. He had become a famous man in the literary world.

Stimulated by this good fortune, and physically invigorated by the pure air of the Berkshire Hills, he proceeded, after a rest of four months, to write "The Wonder Book," another work for children,

that is rich in beautiful fancies, in delightful humor, in elevated sentiments, and in the graces of style. This production, though fairly popular with its youthful readers, and creditable to his talents, did not materially increase his reputation.

Towards the close of 1851 Hawthorne, ever restless as "his seafaring ancestors," removed from Lenox to West Newton. During that Winter he composed his "Blithedale Romance," suggested, as previously hinted, by what he had learned while a member of the Brook Farm community a decade before. Mr. George S. Hillard described it as another rose put into his chaplet, and said that its "sketches of things visible, detached observations, and style generally are exquisite as ever." One of his intimate friends thought it more searching than his previous books in its analysis of the motives which live in the lowest deep of the human soul, and are the real springs of many of its actions which are apparently, though not really, inconsistent with one's character as conceived by others. He also thought "its maxims more profound, and its humor more bright and flashing," than in his other writings. But whether better or worse, it pleased the reading public, increased his fame, and added to his pecuniary resources.

In the Spring of 1852 we find Hawthorne settled in Concord, at the "Wayside," a modest house—not the "Old Manse," his former residence—of which he had become the purchaser. Here he wrote the "Tanglewood Tales," another pretty book for young folks, and the "Life of Franklin Pierce," his old college mate, who was now a candidate for the presidency of the United States. He undertook this latter volume at the request of Pierce, but wrote it as a tribute of friendship to a man for whom, it seems, he cherished a very high personal regard. The volume, though a good piece of literary work, added no rose to his chaplet, but did subject his motives to not a little unfavorable criticism. His son claims that those criticisms were unjust; that his father wrote, not as a politician, but as a friend; not with any expectation of being rewarded with an official appointment, but solely from a wish to benefit a man whom he respected and loved. Taking Hawthorne's peculiarly independent and unselfish character into the question, one may, while perceiving its unwisdom, admit the honesty of the transaction. Yet when one sees President Pierce, immediately after his inauguration, nominating Mr. Hawthorne as United States consul at the port of Liverpool, and Hawthorne

promptly accepting the office, one can scarcely help regretting that the author of the "Scarlet Letter" wrote the "Life" of a candidate for the presidency, with whose political principles he was not in sympathy.

In June, 1853, Hawthorne and his family, consisting of his wife and three children, sailed for Liverpool, where he entered at once upon the performance of the duties of his consulship. During the four years of his consular life his pen was devoted, not to the production of books addressed to the imagination, but to the writing of prosaic dispatches to the state department at Washington, and to his "journals." His seclusive habits kept him from mingling much in general society and led him to shrink from those lionizing attentions which the many admirers of his works would have gladly heaped upon him. Still his society was sought by many distinguished persons. His time was spent pleasantly enough in the work of his office, in his quiet home at Rock Park, a suburb of Liverpool, in frequent excursions to various parts of England, in occasional visits at the homes of distinguished Englishmen, and in the companionship of the very few friends with whom he chose to be intimate. But four years of service sufficed to make his Liver-

pool life distasteful, to give him a very intelligent acquaintance with England and English society, and to make a change of residence desirable. Hence, in 1857, he resigned his consulship. The department at Washington certified that he had performed his duties prudently and efficiently, and, on the 3d of January, 1858, he and his family bade adieu to old England and traveled to Italy, where he spent about eighteen months, chiefly at Rome, and then revisited England.

Hawthorne did not derive unmixed enjoyment, either from continental society or Italian art. Nevertheless, he gathered from the latter and from the legends of the land most of the materials for his next romance, "The Marble Faun." Retiring with these materials to a secluded English village, named Redcar, he wrought them into the fantastic shapes which speak and act in that unique book.

"The Marble Faun" appeared in England as "The Transformation," in the Spring of 1860. Its reception was less enthusiastic than that accorded to his previous romances. Both the reviewers and most of his personal friends failed to comprehend the mysteries of the strange tale. It is admirably written, they said; it describes the artistic productions of Italy with graphic force and precision,

and rare literary beauty; its principal characters are sharply defined, but some of them, Donatello and Miriam especially, are so unnatural as to defy comprehension; and its plot is hazy, puzzling, and inconclusive. A few of his friends, both in England and America, while admitting the haziness of its plot, praised it highly. And, despite the critics, the public bought it. In the end, if it did not add materially to his literary fame, it deducted nothing from it.

Returning to his Concord home in 1860, Hawthorne found the country entering upon the politcal agitations which preceded the slaveholders' rebellion. He was not an abolitionist, yet, resenting the evident purpose of the slave power to nationalize slavery, his sympathies were decidedly with the North. "I hope," he was wont to say, "that we shall give them a terrible thrashing, and then kick them out." But political excitement did not prevent him from using his pen in producing a series of sprightly essays for the *Atlantic Magazine*, which were subsequently collected into a volume entitled, "Our Old Home." He also wrote "Septimius Felton," "Dr. Grimshawe's Secret," etc. But his physical energies began to wilt shortly after his return to Concord. He was not sick, but so de-

pressed and weary, that literary work began to be a wearisome task. This depressed condition gradually gained the mastery until, in 1863, it became too apparent that he was slowly breaking down. His fine form began to waste, his expressive face became pale, and "his great eyes, with their dark, overhanging brows, looked like caverns with a gleam of blue in them." His friends were alarmed, but he strove to appear better than he was, and wore a forced air of unwonted cheerfulness. The doctors advised travel. In March he started on a journey South with his friend and publisher, W. D. Ticknor, for a companion. Unfortunately, Mr. Ticknor died suddenly at Philadelphia. The shock was too much for our author's feeble strength, and he returned to Concord in so depressed a condition that, to prevent him from sinking at once, it was deemed advisable to try the effect of an excursion through Northern New England. His congenial friend, ex-President Pierce, accompanied him, and they reached Plymouth, New Hampshire, very comfortably. On the night of the 18th of May, Hawthorne retired early to his chamber in the Pemigewasset House. Pierce saw him once or twice during the night sleeping quietly. After midnight, being awakened by some howling dogs, Mr. Pierce

entered his room again, and found him dead. Apparently, his death had been but a passing out of the ordinary sleep of wearied nature into that long sleep that knows no waking, until it shall be broken by the trumpet voice of the archangel on the morning of the general resurrection.

We are told by his son, Mr. Julian Hawthorne, that when our author was at college he was met in a woodland path by an old gypsy woman, who was so struck by his remarkable beauty, especially by his large, dark blue, fire-flashing eyes, that, after gazing at him awhile, she asked: "Are you a man or an angel."

The perplexity of this old crone may be taken to illustrate a somewhat similar uncertainty respecting Mr. Hawthorne's character, on the part of many of his readers and critics. Doubtless, there is an atmosphere of mystery about his character as there is, also, about his writings. His wife, writing after his death, said that he "hid himself from others," because he "veiled himself from himself. . . . I never dared to gaze at him, even I, unless his lids were down. It seemed an invasion into a holy place. To the last he was to me, in a measure, a divine mystery, for he was so to himself."

This testimony would seem to imply that Haw-

thorne dwelt more in a region of incongruous, dreamy fancies than in a realm of clear thought irradiated by the light of revealed religion. His habitual abstention from Church attendance suggests that he did not fully accept the teachings of Christ respecting the nature and destiny of man. At the same time his strong belief in the supernatural bound his thoughts to the great problems of life and moved him to seek, however vainly, to solve them through his own imaginations. Vague views, joined to an active mind with introspective habits, begat emotions which, varying with his constantly changing moods, were scarcely intelligible to himself, and, consequently, were inexplicable to others, even to her who knew him best. Fortunately, he inherited a Puritan conscience, to which he was indebted for that wonderful discrimination between right and wrong and for that marvelous power displayed in his works so to analyze human character as to trace the actions of men back behind their apparent motives, to those which lie concealed in the hidden depths of the human heart. In addition to this clear-sighted conscience he seems to have been naturally disinclined to immoral indulgences. His will held his appetites, which, apparently, were not strong, in supreme control. Hence,

though not given to total abstinence, he kept himself in the *perilous* path of a moderate wine drinker on occasions, not because he loved wine, but because of his disposition to exhibit sympathy with his friends—a disposition which, but for the unusual strength of his will, might have led him into guilty excesses, and which is reprehensible in whomsoever found.

Writing to Mr. Julian Hawthorne concerning his father's character Mr. Bright, one of the very few friends whom Hawthorne admitted to his confidence, said: "He was almost the *best* man I ever knew. . . . I always felt with your father as Lord Carlisle once said he felt with Dr. Channing, that you were in a presence in which nothing that was impure, base, or selfish could breathe at ease."

This was doubtless so. Though not an experimental Christian, Hawthorne possessed many rare moral excellencies. He was an unselfish, honorable, sensitive, affectionate, pure-minded man. Those who knew him best loved him most. He was the idol of his household, and his married life appears to have been exceptionally and beautifully happy. Had his moral qualities been rooted in the love of Christ, his character would have shone with a splendor rarely equaled in human story.

Writing to him of his romances in 1857, his sister Elizabeth said: "People who abjure upon principle all other works of fiction, make an exception of yours." That this exception had its justification in the qualities of his romances will scarcely be denied by a liberal mind acquainted with them. They are all eminently moral in spirit and in sentiment. They clothe virtue in garments of beauty, and make it redolent of sweet perfumes. They make vice a thing to be dreaded because of its consequences which they depict, not so much in their gross external effects, as in the mental misery and moral disorder they cause in the guilty soul. They are, also, valuable as portraying the spirit and social life of the New England people in the early period of their history. What Sir Walter Scott did for Scottish life and character, Hawthorne has done for New England people of the olden time, not, perhaps, with such a realistically romantic pencil as that which the great magician of the North employed, but with a power of analysis and a psychological insight which can not be claimed for Scott. Hence, if one must read fiction at all, one may find the mental recreation he seeks in Hawthorne. Yet, when one looks at life from the view point of the Cross of Christ, one is moved to inquire

whether, after all, the production of even harmless fictions is the highest use to which the genius of a Hawthorne ought to be put? Surely, to lead one wandering soul to the Cross is a greater result than to write a hecatomb of moral and amusing romances.

V.

REV. SYDNEY SMITH.

The Reviewer, Social Reformer, and Humorist.

"He that negotiates between God and man,
As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
Of lightness in his speech. 'T is pitiful
To court a grin when you should woo a soul,
To break a jest when pity would inspire
Pathetic exhortation."

—COWPER.

EDWARD EVERETT, writing of his "delightful visit" at Combe-Florey, the rectory of Rev. Sydney Smith, said: "The first remark I made to myself after listening to Mr. Sydney Smith's conversation was, that if he had not been known as the wittiest man of his day he would have been accounted one of the wisest." This epigrammatic observation is equivalent to saying that Mr. Smith's wit was so brilliant that it eclipsed his sagacity. His wise thoughts, of which his speech was by no means barren, were like small jewels encased in settings

so large and so curiously wrought as to divert the observer's attention from the gems they were meant to display. Hence it came to pass that, as one of his admirers has recently remarked, his memory is kept green, not so much by his really "great services to rational freedom," as by his humorous sayings, many of which have become current coin in the speech of the reading world.

Perhaps there is a modicum of poetic justice in this. Mr. Smith resembled Democritus, the laughing philosopher of antiquity, of whom Juvenal said, that he laughed at the world whenever he stepped across his threshold. Smith did more, for his jocund laughter at men and things constantly rang out both within and without his threshold. And this sportive laughter was everywhere contagious. All men enjoyed it and joined in it. But could they, on reflection, help suspecting that the weed of contempt grew close by the sources of those streams of amusing speech which flowed so constantly from his lips? That shrewd observer, Montaigne, remarks that "things we laugh at are by that laughter expressed to be of no moment." How natural it was, therefore, that the wisdom of our modern Democritus, being so lightly expressed, so apparently lacking in earnestness, not to say sincerity,

should float unheeded from the memories of men, and that he should be remembered more as a "remarkable buffoon" than as a reformer of many social abuses!

The parents of Sydney Smith were neither rich nor titled. In allusion to his somewhat plebeian origin he used to say, in his jocose way, "The Smiths never had any '*arms*,' and have invariably sealed their letters with their thumbs." His father, Mr. Robert Smith, inherited a small property, which he was not sufficiently a man of affairs to increase. A vein of eccentricity ran through his character. He was odd, and gloried in his oddity. He was, nevertheless, possessed of some rare intellectual qualities. He was fortunate in his marriage to a lady of French descent and Huguenot blood, who was endowed with both beauty of form and nobility of mind. From her Sydney Smith inherited his remarkable vivacity, geniality, and energy; and his father's oddity was reproduced, though considerably chastened, in those queerly expressed exaggerations which characterized his wit.

Sydney Smith's early life was not, on the whole, very enjoyable. He was born in 1771, at Woodfood, Essex, the second of four brothers and one sister. In their childhood these precocious brothers

preferred books and bookish discussions to the sports of the playground. When only six years old Sydney was sent from home, first to a private school and then, with his younger brother Courtenay, to the Winchester Grammar School. In this latter institution he suffered extremely, as John Wesley did at the Charter House, through lack of sufficient food and the rough semi-brutal conduct of his senior school-mates. To the day of his death the recollection of this abusive treatment roused him to sharp resentment. His progress in learning, however, was so rapid that he became captain of the school. He and his brother were so successful in winning prizes that the boys of their form wrote to the head master, saying, "We will not try for the college prizes if the Smiths are allowed to contend for them any more, because they always get them."

Sydney's scholarship was rated so high that he left Winchester captain of the school, and, as such, was entitled to a scholarship and to a subsequent fellowship in New College, Oxford. Little is known of his career in that institution beyond the fact that in due time he gained his fellowship, and that, owing to his pecuniary disability to live after their expensive fashion, and to his pride of character, he

associated very little with his fellow-students. Singularly enough, this young man, so uncommonly gifted with social qualities, formed no intimate college friendships. His wit, up to the time of his graduation, was an "unknown quantity," and respecting any special influences which may have contributed to the formation of his character during his college life no light is thrown.

Sydney Smith felt no call to the ministry of the Gospel. His inclination was for the bar, for which the character of his mind eminently fitted him. But his impecunious father, unable to furnish the means necessary to his study of the law, insisted that he should enter the Church, saying, with blunt sternness, "You may be a college tutor or a parson." Not choosing to be a tutor, and seeing no other opening, Sydney, after much hesitation, consented to enter the Church, was ordained, and, having no wealthy patron to present him to a desirable Church living, was forced either to half starve on the five hundred dollars per annum derived from his fellowship, or to accept the curacy of an insignificant parish at Nether Avon, a mean hamlet situated in the midst of the solitude of Salisbury Plain. So dreary was this lone spot that, shortly after reaching it, he wrote, after being fairly settled there,

"Nothing can equal the profound, the immeasurable, the awful dullness of this place in which I lie dead and buried, in hopes of a joyful resurrection in the year 1796."

But, as every desert has its oasis, so did this dreary parish afford one alleviation to the situation of our wrongly placed curate. Mr. Hicks Beach, the squire of Nether Avon, was a gentleman and a man of culture, who enjoyed his pastor's spicy after-dinner talks in his drawing-room on Sunday afternoons. The sparks from the curate's wit soon warmed his generous heart into friendship for the poor Oxford scholar, and, after enjoying his pleasant company, and assisting him in his earnest endeavors to instruct the semi-barbarous rustics of the hamlet during his occasional residence in the parish, he persuaded him to resign the curacy at the end of two years, and to proceed with his eldest son, as his friend and tutor, to the University of Weimar, in Saxony. Gladly bidding adieu to his unprofitable parish, the young parson prepared to start with his pupil-friend for that seat of learning; but hearing that Germany was disturbed by Napoleon's wars, he conducted the young man to Edinburgh. In that city Mr. Smith soon found congenial society, with an entrance to the path along

which lay his way to literary celebrity, social distinction, and, finally, to Church preferment.

To Smith, now twenty-six years of age, this transition from the doleful dullness and rustic stupidity of Nether Avon to the literary circle composed of such brilliant talkers as Jeffrey, Horner, Brougham, Walter Scott, Archibald Murray, etc., must have been like the flight of a soul from Dante's Purgatory into Paradise. These men, destined soon to stand among the first men of the age in their respective departments, were as yet far from being rich or arrogantly aristocratic. Hence the poverty of Smith was no bar to his acquaintance with gentlemen who were quick to take the measure of his mind and to enjoy the raciness of his witty conversation which seems to have been developed for the first time by his contact with those great men. They received him cordially, and were soon bound to him by the tie of a friendship which proved lasting as their lives.

Long years after, Smith, writing of his experiences in Edinburgh, said: "When shall I see Scotland again? Never shall I forget the happy days passed there amidst odious smells, barbarous sounds, bad suppers, excellent hearts, and most enlightened and cultivated understandings." Yet,

despite this friendship for Scotland, he never could help jesting over the foibles of its people, who were so slow to comprehend his jests that he sometimes said, "It requires a surgical operation to get a joke well into a Scotch understanding. Their only idea of wit . . . is laughing immoderately at stated intervals. They are so imbued with metaphysics that they even make love metaphysically. I overheard a young lady of my acquaintance, at a dance in Edinburgh, exclaim in a sudden pause in the music, 'What you say, my lord, is very true of love in the *aibstract*, but'—here the fiddlers began fiddling furiously, and the rest was lost." This scene was probably little else than a joke, since he never hesitated to sacrifice truth on the altar of his wit, as he indirectly confessed when, speaking of his friend Francis Horner, he said, "Horner loved truth so much that he never could bear any jesting upon important subjects."

Mr. Smith, though still without pecuniary prospects sufficient to justify his marriage at the bar of prudence, ventured to become a Benedict two years after his arrival in Edinburgh. Miss Pybus, his chosen bride, had a small property, which he honorably insisted should be settled upon her and her children. His own resources were represented in

six old silver teaspoons, with which he one day rushed into the room, merry as a schoolboy on a holiday, and flinging them into his bride's lap, exclaimed, "There, Kate, you lucky girl, I give you all my fortune!" To these spoons a generous gift of £750 from the squire of Nether Avon, for directing his son's studies, was a timely addition to his meager resources. He also took two other pupils, from whom he derived a moderate income. But, seeing no prospect in Edinburgh of gaining a position in the Church, he removed to London in 1803, where he hoped his gifts and attainments would procure him a presentation to some desirable Church living.

About a year before this removal he and his friends had originated the *Edinburgh Review*, which was, as Coleridge subsequently remarked, the commencement of "an important epoch in periodical criticism." It was first suggested by Smith to Jeffrey and Brougham when, in the midst of a lively conversation in Jeffrey's modest parlor, Sydney half jestingly said, "Let us set up a review!" This proposal, so lightly made, struck his companions so favorably that they accepted it at once, with acclamation. He then laughingly suggested that the motto of the Review should be, "*Tenui Musam*

meditamur avena" ("We cultivate literature on a little oatmeal"). This was objected to as being too truthful a confession of their actual poverty, and, after some discussion, they agreed to take a line from Publius Syrus, of whom Mr. Smith says, "none of us had read a single line." The motto, which is still retained, was, "*Judex damnatur cum nocens absolvitur*" ("The judge is condemned when the guilty is acquitted"). When Walter Scott saw this pugnacious motto, he remarked, "The motto is as if the adventurers had hung out the bloody flag on their title-page."

The spontaneity of this singular beginning of the Review shows that the gentlemen concerned had previously thought of the need of such a publication. There was a "Monthly Review" in existence, which was not critical, but only a collection of essays, poems, etc. The literary interests of the age demanded a periodical of a higher character—a review aiming, as Smith well said, "to make men wise in ten pages who have no appetite for a hundred, to condense nourishment, to work with pulp and essence, and to guard the stomach from idle burden and unmeaning bulk."

Clearly perceiving this public need, these gentlemen soon set to work in good earnest to supply

it. Mr. Smith appears to have taken the lead in the preliminary business arrangements, and in editing the first three numbers. Its first number appeared October 10, 1802, and caused a marked sensation in the literary world. The first edition of seven hundred and fifty copies was quickly bought by the hungry public. So also was a second. Other and larger editions quickly followed. It was a success from the start, and when it reached its third number it had a circulation of twenty-five hundred, which, in later years, rose to some twelve thousand copies.

Sydney Smith informally edited the first three numbers; but, on his removal to London, Jeffrey was regularly chosen its editor, with an allowance of two hundred and fifty dollars per number, and fifty dollars for each sheet of sixteen pages—about three dollars per page. After a few years the editor's allowance was doubled, and over five dollars per page was paid for contributed articles. Jeffrey was strongly supported in his editorship by Mr. Smith, who ranked first among his coterie of accomplished contributors, which included Francis Horner, Brougham, Mackintosh, Dr. Thomas Brown, and Hallam. Later on, that master of historical criticism, Macaulay, made its pages sparkle with his

brilliant essays. Sydney Smith's articles probably did more to draw popular attention to the Review in its early years than those of any other writer, because he wrote on questions in which the general public was practically interested. He assailed social barbarisms, unjust laws, cruel usages, and ecclesiastical abuses with such clearness of statement, such telling appeals to common sense and conscience, and such satirical denunciations, that he won the ears of intelligent readers, capturing the convictions of all but those stubborn conservatives in Church and State who, unable to repel his attacks, were exasperated by his boldness.

But while Smith made the Review popular with the many, Jeffrey gave it greater strength and higher critical reputation than his chief contributor Jeffrey had less wit, but nicer discrimination; less vivacity, but more correct literary taste; less transparency of statement, but profounder thought and richer, though not more abundant, illustration; less sympathy with the practical side of things, but superior intellectual power and brilliancy of style. Hence, while the Review owed very much of its first success to Smith, it was more indebted in the end to Jeffrey, because he wrote for the cultivated classes who loved literature of the highest qualities

for its own sake, and upon whose patronage such reviews must finally depend.

On his arrival in London, Mr. Smith was warmly greeted by his friend Horner, whom he had playfully dubbed the "Knight of the Shaggy Eyebrows," by Sir Samuel Romilly, Sir James Mackintosh, and other kindred spirits, who knew and prized his worth. They did their best to introduce him to society, and to encourage his hopes. But his poverty pinched him so sorely at first that his noble wife felt compelled to take a pearl necklace, left her by her mother, then recently deceased, and sell it to the jewelers for twenty-five hundred dollars. Besides his actual poverty, he had to face the discouragement arising from the freezing coldness, not to say avowed hostility, of the dignitaries in Church and State who were the dispensers of Church preferments. His connection with the Review, already universally admitted to be "uncommonly well done, and, perhaps, the first in Europe," was now known. But it stood, as Jeffrey said, on the two legs of literature and Whiggery; hence, its literary and progressive opinions were obnoxious to the Tories, who were then in power. Had it been a feeble thing, conservative leaders might have despised it; but being a thing

of power they feared it, and therefore treated Smith, its most outspoken advocate of reform, and a man considerably in advance of his age, with such studied neglect that, at first, he could rarely find a London pulpit in which to preach. After being admitted to one, he wrote with characteristic playful exaggeration: "I thought I perceived that the greater part of the congregation thought me mad. The clerk was as pale as death in helping me off with my gown, for fear I should bite him." This prejudice reached even to the throne. George III, after reading some of his papers, had said, "Mr. Smith is a very clever fellow, but he will never be a bishop"—an ominous prediction, which was too literally fulfilled.

But, in spite of these chilling mists of prejudice, Sydney did not despair. He had faith in himself, and his friends were eager to assist him. An introduction from his brother Robert to Lord Holland led to his intimate friendship with that nobleman, happily described by Lord John Russell as "a man who won without seeming to court, instructed without seeming to teach, and amused without laboring to be witty." Henceforth Smith had free access to those famous assemblies at Holland House, where many of the most eminent men of England were then

accustomed to meet and to enjoy what Lady Holland describes as "the perfection of social intercourse, a sort of mental dram-drinking, rare, as it was delightful." To this brilliant conversation Smith contributed not a little genuine Attic salt. His vivacity, independence, and sagacious observations, "weighted with wisdom and winged with wit," made him one of the most fascinating talkers in those literary assemblies. Superior to him in wealth and position as were most of his associates there, he never failed to speak his mind freely and fully, and when the imperious mistress of Holland House, with a rudeness not uncommon with her, said to him, one evening, "Sydney, ring the bell," he replied, "Yes, and shall I sweep the room?" The fact that she remained his friend after this sharp, witty rebuff, illustrates both the suavity and the self-respect of our poor young clergyman. Had there been the least touch of chagrin in his reply her proud ladyship would have become his life-long foe, since she was capable of being "a good hater."

But this social disposition did not prevent Mr. Smith, when at his own fireside, from wishing that "smiles were meat for children, or kisses could be bread." He needed a friend who could introduce him to clerical employment. Such a friend he soon

found in the generous Sir Thomas Bernard, who chanced to hear one or more of the few sermons he had been permitted to preach in London. Charmed with his discourses, as Dugald Stewart had previously been in Edinburgh, this large-souled man secured him the appointment of "alternate evening preacher at the Foundling Hospital." His success in attracting a large congregation of fashionable people to the hitherto neglected church of this institution led to his appointment as morning preacher at Berkeley and Fitzroy chapels, alternately. His fame then spread, and, through Sir Thomas Bernard, he was invited to deliver two courses of lectures on "Moral Philosophy" at the Royal Institution. His original and witty method of treating this topic drew such crowds that, writing to Jeffrey, Smith could say, "My lectures, just now, are at such a high pitch of celebrity that I must lose a good deal of reputation before the public settles into a just equilibrium respecting them." From his preaching and from these lectures Smith derived an income barely sufficient, with the strictest economy, for his family needs; until, after struggling with poverty three years, a brighter day began to dawn. The death of Pitt, succeeded by the ministry of Grenville and Fox, put it in the

power of his Whig friends to assist him. And then, at the request of Lord Holland, he was presented to the living of Foston-le-Clay, in Yorkshire. This parish, though not such a one as he would have chosen, was worth twenty-five hundred dollars a year, which he gladly accepted, not because it was ample for his needs—for it was not—but because it was a certainty. For some time he left its duties to a curate, but when a change in the law respecting the residence of the clergy compelled him either to resign or reside within his parish, though reluctant to leave London, he chose to remove to his living, which he did in 1809. Writing to Jeffrey of this flitting to the country, he said, with characteristic quaintness, "I shall take to grazing as quietly as Nebuchadnezzar."

Before going thither, however, he had written a series of letters under the assumed name of Peter Plymley, on the legal disabilities of the Irish Catholics, which had been to public opinion in England as a spark to gunpowder. Ireland, too, was moved to enthusiastic admiration. Since Swift no Protestant clergyman had so ably pleaded in her behalf. Lord Murray, writing of these letters at a later period, said: "After Pascal's Letters, it is the most instructive piece of wisdom in the form

of irony ever written, and had the most important and lasting effects." Their authorship was kept secret a long time, but Smith had his reward in that his liberal sentiments, though a rank offense to the then dominant party, fell like fruitful seed into the popular mind. And when, in 1829, the Catholic Emancipation Bill swept those disabilities into the limbus of dead enactments, he had the satisfaction of knowing that his caustic pen had contributed not a little to that grand result. And since his death his opinions have found their crowning expression in the disestablishment of the Irish Protestant Church.

Mr. Smith was rector of Foston twenty-two years. His parishioners had not been favored with the labors of a resident minister for a hundred and fifty years, but only with the Sabbath services of a curate, whose home was at York, some twelve miles distant. When Sydney arrived among them, driven in a four-wheeled carriage and dressed in broadcloth, they stared at him as a visitor from a distant planet. Their ignorance of society, and, indeed, of almost every thing worthy to be called knowledge, appeared when he met the venerable parish clerk, who looked more ancient than the ruined parsonage house, and was the most important man in the village.

After conversing awhile with his new minister, the wrinkled old man, with the natural shrewdness of a Yorkshireman, said, as he struck his crutch-stick on the ground, "Meester Smith, it often stroikes moy moind that people as comes frae London is such *fools*. But you, I see, you are no fool!"

The clerk made no mistake in thus judging Sydney Smith, who was, indeed, no fool, but a man fully bent on acting the part, if not of an evangelical pastor, yet of a benefactor to his utterly uncultivated flock. It certainly is a pleasing picture to view this man, so eminently fitted by nature and education to shine as "a bright, particular star" in the most refined social circles of the British metropolis, cheerfully going to work among those ignorant rustics, teaching them to improve their hard outward circumstances, and to become wiser and better men. To do this he had first to become his own teacher in many things. To cultivate his glebe, consisting of three hundred acres, he had to study agriculture, cattle breeding, and dairy management. There being nothing but a mere hovel for a parsonage he had, after considerable delay, to build a house with his own scanty means. In doing this he was his own architect, and while eschewing every principle of architectural beauty in its exter-

nal appearance, he made its interior a model of coziness and convenience. To promote the material comfort of his parishioners he became their instructor in gardening and in matters relating to domestic economy. Hence this merry-hearted man, in addition to his own many family cares, was, as he described himself, "village parson, village doctor"—he had attended medical lectures in Edinburgh—"village comforter, village magistrate, and Edinburgh Reviewer."

That the rude inhabitants of Foston parish were benefited in mind and morals by Mr. Smith's labors is not to be questioned. His benevolence also won their affectionate regards. But, concerning the spiritual results of his ministry his biographers are silent. How could it be otherwise? He sowed the seed of good morals, but not of spiritual life. How, then, could there be spiritual fruitage?

To most clergymen Foston would have proved the grave of their expectations of preferment. The ear of the great busy world could have caught no echoes from their humble and secluded pulpit. But this master of good-natured satire, this sagacious humanitarian, this prince of conversationalists, could not be hidden forever from public view even in the deep obscurity of that out-of-the-way spot. His

fame as a witty talker and writer drew many distinguished visitors to his hospitable fireside, and, after the first six years of his rectorship, he became a frequent and welcome guest in the mansions of the most aristocratic families in Yorkshire and Cheshire. Some of his political opponents were attracted to him, and, despite his unflinching liberalism, became his personal friends. To know Sydney Smith was to love him. Lord Lyndhurst was one such friend, and, braving the resentment of his own party, he presented him, in 1828, with a prebendal stall in the cathedral of Bristol. His lordship did him still further service by procuring him an exchange of his Foston parish for Combe-Florey, near Taunton, from which beautiful location, really a valley of flowers, he could readily reach Bristol. In 1831, the Whigs being again in office, Lord Grey appointed him to a prebendal stall in St. Paul's, London, in exchange for the one he held in Bristol. This was his highest preferment. His liberal opinions, especially his witty attacks on abuses in the Church, no doubt prevented his appointment to a bishopric. Dean Swift's wit had cost him a similar loss—albeit it is supposed that, if Lord Grey's administration had continued longer than it did, that liberal statesman would have de-

fied existing prejudices and offered Sydney Smith a miter.

Mr. Smith's duties as canon of St. Paul's requiring him to reside in London part of each year, he was able once more to indulge his fondness for cultivated society. Holding honorable place in the Church, being in easy circumstances, and in the enjoyment of good health, he was never more animated and brilliant in conversation. "It is hardly possible," said Lord John Russell, "to describe his manner or convey the slightest idea of what his powers really were, in their most brilliant moments, to those who have never witnessed them. In his peculiar style he has never been equaled, and, perhaps, will not be surpassed." When Sydney said to a lady, "Ah, you flavor every thing; you are the vanilla of society," he paid her a compliment which, applied to himself, would have been sober fact.

About three years before his death, Mr. Smith became a rich man by the death of his younger brother, Courtenay, who left him a third of the large fortune he had acquired in India. It came too late, however, to do him much other service than to enable him to enlarge his benevolences. He grew old cheerfully, and retained to the last his habit of uttering fantastic jests. In the Autumn

before his death, he said: "I feel so weak, both in body and mind, that I verily believe, if the knife were put into my hand I should not have strength or energy enough to stick it into a dissenter." And when nearing his end, and alluding to the spare diet ordered by his physician, he smilingly said to General Fox, "Ah, Charles, I wish I were allowed even the wing of a roasted butterfly." In his last hours he spoke very little. On the 22d of February, 1845, he quietly passed into the realm of the departed.

Macaulay, giving his estimate of Sydney Smith, said, "He is universally admitted to have been a great reasoner and the greatest master of ridicule that has appeared among us since Swift." In calling him "a great reasoner" Macaulay does not imply that he was either a deep or an original thinker, since a great reasoner is not necessarily a deep thinker, nor is a profound thinker always a great reasoner. Every student of Sydney Smith's published sermons and of his seventy-six Review articles knows that he was neither original nor profound in thought, but that the distinguishing feature of his mind was its marvelously quick and clear perceptive power. To this faculty he was indebted for the rare transparency of his statements

and his remarkable proficiency in "the art of putting things." His mind was logical, therefore he generally reasoned correctly, but, always excepting his witty forms of speech, he invented little or nothing. His articles mostly dealt with questions of fact, with social and legal barbarisms which offended both his strong sense of "justice and his uncommon common sense." Seizing on what was cruel or unjust in the then existing laws on poaching, on the trials of prisoners, on the exclusion of Romanists and dissenters from state offices, on the use of man-traps for the protection of property, etc., he first stated the facts in each case so clearly as almost to render argument unnecessary. He then proceeded to denounce the wrong with such pitiless invective, and to hold up its absurdity with such rasping, yet mirth-provoking satire, as almost compelled his readers to laugh at the latter and to feel indignant at the former. His favorite logical weapon was the *reductio ad absurdum*, and, with his keen sense of the ridiculous, he made it irresistible. He also treated prevailing barbarous usages, such as the cruelties practiced on boy chimney-sweeps, etc., in the same way. Most of the evils he assailed being repugnant to men's sense of justice, and to the spirit of kindness which the great religious

revival of the preceding century had begotten in the public mind, his strong reasoning, no doubt, contributed to their overthrow. Because of this vigorous use of his powers he deserves honorable place among the political and social reformers of his times.

Macaulay's estimate of his wit challenges a comparison between him and Dean Swift, whose claim to the first place in English literature as a witty writer few, if any, will dispute. He ranks Smith, in this quality, next to the irascible Dean. Smith's humor winds like a belt of light through his essays, and glimmers mildly in his sermons. And, to cite Mr. Reid, "his talk was like a stream of fireworks, brilliant, incessant, and perfectly harmless." His wit, though less incisive and keen than that of Swift, was superior to it in its spirit. Swift's wit was bitter and malignant; Smith's, except when leveled at the evangelical party of his times, was genial and good-natured, the outflow of his heart, which was a perennial fountain of cheerfulness. It was also, in the main, free from coarseness and vulgarity, while Swift's was often coarse, and even filthy. Smith's wit was often grotesque, as when, at a dinner-table, while discussing liberalism, he said, "I must confess I have one little weakness, one secret wish—I

should like to roast a Quaker"—a jest intended to excite the wonder of a very simple-minded guest, whose dullness prevented him from seeing that the mirthful parson was only jesting. Sometimes his wit was a shaft of keen, though good-natured, sarcasm, as when, while canon of St. Paul's, discussing the question in the Chapter of placing a wooden pavement round St. Paul's, he said with innocent gravity of tone and expression, "If my reverend brethren here will but lay their heads together, the thing will be done in a trice."

Smith's wit did not smell of the lamp, but was spontaneous, as all true wit must be. He was, as Leigh Hunt said of Rossini, "the genius of animal spirits," out of which his jests bubbled like water from a perennial spring, though he, no doubt, unconsciously cultivated it, by training his mind to look for occult relations between things apparently unrelated. Hence, he was always full of it, and it flowed from his lips as freely at his own fireside as in the gay assemblies at Holland House. Said Lord Macaulay, after spending a few days with him at Foston rectory: "He is not one of those show talkers who reserve all their good things for special occasions. It seems to be his greatest luxury to keep his wife and daughters laughing for two or

three hours every day." To his credit it must be said that, as a rule, Sydney Smith used this gift in the interests of humanity, and as "the vehicle of his wisdom,"

> "Laughing to teach the truth—
> What hinders? As some teachers give to boys
> Junkets and knacks that they may learn apace."

He evidently believed with Horace that

> "Joking decides great things
> Stronger and better oft than earnest can,"

which, though it may be true, measurably, is an axiom better suited to a man of the world than to a Christian, to whom every thing in life is, or should be, real and earnest.

His only serious abuse of this endowment was, as hinted above, his persistent tirades against spiritual religion, upon which he leveled his bitterest jokes, in doing which he illustrated the Greek proverb, "Mirth out of season is a grievous ill." Never, perhaps, did a clergyman more significantly illustrate Paul's assertion that to comprehend spiritual things one must possess that "discernment" which is the exclusive possession of a "spiritually-minded" man. Sydney Smith was not such a man. He did not profess to be one, but persistently denounced experimental piety, believing it, as he said,

"to be very possible to be a good Christian without degrading the human understanding to such trash and folly as Methodism." He was eminently moral, intellectually religious, observant of the forms of Christian worship, but apparently not the possessor of that inner spiritual life which is begotten and sustained by what Paul described as "Christ in me the hope of glory." On no other ground can one harmonize his bitter, and even profane, attacks on evangelical churchmen and dissenters with his honesty. Mr. Reid not only does not defend Mr. Smith in this thing, but squarely censures him in these words:

"But, although he completely misunderstood the Wesleyan revival, and grossly caricatured the splendid efforts of the non-conformist Churches to awaken the religious enthusiasm of the people in the work of foreign missions, yet it can not be questioned, in spite of such blemishes on his reputation, that his influence, as a whole, was given steadily, and at much personal cost, to the advocacy of the very principles of toleration which have now triumphed to such an extent that his own essays on the dissenters and their missionary schemes are little more than a magazine of exploded fallacies, and read like the record of an archaic period.

Sydney Smith misunderstood the evangelical enthusiasm, . . . but his sweeping tirades have long since been refuted by experience."

This is frank and honorable. It was due to the parties Smith so ruthlessly assailed, and does no injustice to the memory of Mr. Smith, who, despite his faults, will long be remembered for his humor, admired for his courage, respected for his abilities, and esteemed for his benevolence. Despite the inconsistency of his excessive, frolicsome, incessant humor with his clerical office, one can not help loving the merry-hearted man. Neither can one who believes Christianity to be not only a doctrine and a code of ethics, but also a life having its seat in the affections, help regretting that this highly gifted man, whom many "wise men loved, and even wits admired," did not add to his humane benevolence, his unquestionable moral courage, his obvious sincerity, his manly independence, and his unique literary ability, the crowning glory of a "life hid with Christ in God." Had he done so, his reputation as a minister might have been equal to his fame as a reviewer, and his religious life more in harmony than it actually was, with the dignified life of the Lord Jesus.

VI.

CHARLES JAMES FOX,

The Parliamentary Orator.

"His words, like so many nimble and airy servitors, trip about him at command."

DURING the long conflict between England and America, which ended in the recognition of our National Independence, our cause had no champion in the British Parliament who so thoroughly comprehended the principles involved as Charles James Fox. Chatham, in the House of Peers, and Burke, in the House of Commons, protested eloquently against the war, but neither of them expounded the American view of the question with such crystalline clearness, nor expressed such undoubted confidence in the courage of the colonists, nor predicted the outcome of the conflict with such positiveness of conviction as Fox.

It was Fox's good fortune to be aristocratically born. Every advantage that flows from high social

and political connections, and from almost unlimited wealth, was his inheritance. It was his misfortune to be the son of a thoroughly corrupt man, who, in the spirit of Lord Chesterfield, was so unnaturally wicked as to take pains to introduce this favorite son, at an early age, to the dissipation of the German Spa and to the beastly pleasures of gay life in Paris.

This detestable and universally detested father was Henry Fox, the first Lord Holland, and one of the younger sons of Stephen Fox, the founder of the Holland family. Stephen Fox was born in obscurity; but owing to his uncommon force of character, to the friendship of a nobleman, who conceived a strong liking for him, and to a series of singularly fortunate events, he rose from the humble position of choir-boy in Salisbury Cathedral to the rank of staff officer in the army of the unfortunate King Charles I. After the final defeat of the cavaliers, Stephen Fox followed young Prince Charles to France, where he rendered the uncrowned wanderer very essential and valuable services. For these he was liberally rewarded by his royal master after the Restoration. He soon rolled in wealth, which, Evelyn says, "was honestly got, and unenvied." His administrative abilities must have

been superior, and his principles, though not positively corrupt, somewhat facile; since, as Mr. Trevelyan observes, in his recent life of Fox, "he was a favorite with twelve successive Parliaments and with four successive monarchies."

Henry Fox, one of his younger sons, inherited much of his ability, but neither his honesty nor his patriotism. He was covetous, even to rapacity, ambitious of place and preferment, utterly lacking in self-respect, unfaithful to his political friends, and ready to sacrifice the advantage of the State to his own interests. His peerage, with the title of Lord Holland, was the price paid him by Lord Bute, for securing, through bribery and intimidation, a majority of the House of Commons in favor of the "Peace of Paris." For this vile service he had been promised an earldom, but was compelled to be content with a barony. When reproaching Lord Bute for this breach of faith, the latter said it was only "a pious fraud." Fox quickly and wittily retorted, "I perceive the fraud, my lord, but not the piety."

Such, in his political life, was the father of Charles J. Fox. In his domestic circle, however, he was another, and, in some respects, a far better man. "There was no limit," says Trevelyan, "to

the attachment he inspired and the happiness he spread around him. . . . His home presented a beautiful picture of undoubting and undoubted affection." But even in that affection he betrayed the absence of that "just distinction between right and wrong" which had proved the bane of his political career. "The notion of making any body of whom he was fond uncomfortable, for the sake of so very doubtful an end as the attainment of self-control, was altogether foreign to his creed and his disposition." Hence, though he was, as he confesses, "immoderately fond" of his son Charles (who was born January 24, 1749), yet, because of his childish precocity, abounding good humor, and piquant pertness, he made no attempt to correct the engaging little fellow's faults. "Never mind," said he to his wife, when she spoke somewhat anxiously one day about the boy's passionate temper, "he is a very sensible little fellow, and will learn to cure himself."

This reply was characteristic of his general method of dealing with Charles. "Let nothing be done to break his spirit; the world will do that business fast enough," said this foolishly fond father. Acting on this theory, he became such a slave to the young child's whims, that when the willful fel-

low declared one day that he would destroy a watch which had fallen into his hands, Lord Holland replied, "Well, if you must, I suppose you must."

When Charles was seven years old his too-indulgent father permitted him to decide whether he would stay at home or go to school. If he chose going to school, would he go to an aristocratic academy at Wandsworth, or to the more public school at Eton? The boy chose the former, attended it eighteen months, and then resolved to go to Eton. There his brilliant abilities, his "sagacity," his "fascinating and masterful character," won the admiration of his teachers and the good will of his fellow-pupils. Trevelyan says of him, when fourteen years old: "Never was there a more gracious child, more rich in promise, more prone to good."

At that critical moment in a child's life Lord Holland took his promising boy to Germany and France. There, with unnatural disregard for the claims of morality and decency, he taught him his first lessons in those expensive vices which afterward stained his private life, subjected him to many pecuniary embarrassments, and circumscribed his usefulness to society. But, despite his father's vile pandering to his lower nature, the lad's intellectual

aspirations were stronger than his love for the pleasures of Paris. Hence, after four months, he wished to return to Eton. There, though much given to sociality and questionable amusements, he was a diligent student, gained distinction for schoolboy eloquence, and displayed the germs of those great qualities of mind which subsequently led Burke to call him "the greatest debater the world ever saw."

In 1764 Fox left for Oxford. Here he found the gentlemen commoners, with whom he associated, indifferent to college studies, but enthusiastic in their pursuit of the pleasures of "high life." Fox joined heartily in their card parties and other amusements; yet not so fully as to prevent him from being a hard reader, an earnest student of mathematics and of the classics. These studies were magnets to his active intellect, and pursuing them, as he did, for their own sake, he won the distinction of being almost the only really diligent student in his class. Writing of his college studies after the close of the first year, Trevelyan says: "Three more years of such a life would have fortified his character and molded his tastes, would have preserved him from untold evil, and quadrupled his influence as a statesman. But every thing

the poor fellow tried to do for himself was undone by the fatal caprice of his father."

This caprice led Lord Holland to interrupt his son's studies by taking him to Paris in 1765; to remove him from college in the Spring of 1766; to keep him traveling on the Continent until he procured him a seat in the House of Commons in 1768. While on his travels in Italy and France Fox led a double life. Having unlimited supplies of money, being associated with Lord Carlisle, Lord Fitzwilliam, and Mr. Uvedale Price, three wealthy young men of his own age, whose names, like his own, caused the doors of courts and palaces to be opened for their entertainment, it was not surprising that young Fox, with his friends, plunged deeply into the follies and sins of fashionable circles. Lord John Russell says of his life at this period, that it was "thoughtless, idle, and licentious; his letters treat of private theatricals, of low amours, and of the distinctions and promotions of his friends."

But if his life had its sensuous it had also its intellectual side. If the seeds of sensuality sown during his boyhood by his father's guilty hand produced a rank crop of vices, his nobler intellect occasionally asserted its power over his passions,

put a measure of restraint on his devotion to low pursuits, and stimulated him to acquire the Italian language, and to study with enthusiasm the treasures of Italian literature. It rarely happens that a young man can be both profligate and studious. When sensuous passions rule they are imperious, and are apt to extend their empire until it includes both body and mind. But there was something so regal in the mind of Fox that it was able to protect itself against the absolute domination of the sensuous side of his nature. In spite of the latter it would seek food suited to its demands. And it did this with a degree of energy which enabled Fox to make himself master of whatever subject he chose to study. He had the power, in a very exceptional measure, of throwing the entire force of his mind into whatever he undertook, whether it was to play a game of chess, to return a tennis-ball, or to feast on the beauties of Dante or Ariosto. In all things it was his motto "to labor at excellence." Hence his attainments were acquired, not by a genius that absorbed knowledge without effort, but by genius which, on occasions, followed the wise man's precept, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." He confessed this when, to an admiring friend who asked him the secret of his

skill at tennis, he replied, "I am a very painstaking man."

In the Spring of 1768, when Fox was only nineteen years old, Lord Holland purchased a seat in Parliament for his favorite boy, and called him away from the dissipations of Paris to the equally corrupt associations of high life in London. Those pessimists who fancy our own age and country to be wallowing in the lowest deeps of social and political corruption, should review their studies of English society as it was when Charles Fox appeared in the House of Commons as the representative of the pocket borough of Midhurst. Our own times are, no doubt, sufficiently wicked to awaken the anxieties of the moralist and patriot. But they are pure when compared with those of Fox. His was an age disfigured in its aristocracy by every vice but hypocrisy; for it made no attempt to conceal, but rather gloried in its vices. Gaming, racing, betting, place-hunting, venality, servility, extravagance, licentiousness, drunkenness, bribery, and dishonesty were almost universal in the fashionable circles to which young Fox, in virtue of his father's immense wealth and high connections, had free access. What could be expected after his continental experiences, but that he should

seize on these pleasures of the town with avidity? That he did so we have too abundant testimony. Lord John Russell writing of the beginning of his political career, says: "It is to be lamented that, during this period of his life, Mr. Fox entered deeply, almost madly, into the pursuit of gaming." Lord Egremont afterward suspected that he was the dupe of foul play. Be that as it might, he borrowed to such an extent that the purchase of the annuities he had granted cost his fond and indulgent father no less a sum than £140,000. Horace Walpole also said: "Fox was dissolute, dissipated, idle beyond measure."

That these moral stains spotted the character of so distinguished a friend of constitutional freedom is, as Lord Russell observes, "to be lamented." It is also matter of regret that during the first five years of his public life Fox gave the influence of his great abilities, not to the friends of parliamentary liberty, but to the supporters of the Crown in its persistent efforts to govern by royal prerogative, through a servile ministry and a venal majority in the House of Commons. The demoralizing effect of this policy sometimes made itself apparent even to its narrow-minded, though well-meaning author, George III. Hence, when speaking to an

ex-governor of Gibraltar of the fact that he, as governor, had corresponded with no less than five secretaries of state, the king observed: "This trade of politics is a rascally business. It is a trade for a scoundrel and not for a gentleman."

That royal brain must have been strangely dull not to perceive that it was not the nature of things, but the policy which made the politics of his kingdom a "rascally business." But young Fox, coming into the House of Commons "as into the hunting field, glowing with anticipations of enjoyment;" without any fixed political principles; with his patriotism as yet unawakened; with no serious views of the importance of his position; with no active sense of responsibility either to God or man for his political action; with little to guide him besides the theories of public life derived from his place-hunting father and his own self-seeking associates, very naturally fell into the ranks of the majority which supported the pretensions of the throne. "He was willing," says Trevelyan, "to serve the government as a partisan." Hence, we find him entering warmly into the celebrated and protracted contest between the king and the Tories on the one side, and the notorious John Wilkes, supported by Burke and the Whigs, on the other.

Wilkes was, beyond question, a very corrupt man; but when the king sought to crush him by extra-judicial proceedings, because he had taught that "ministers are responsible for the contents of the royal speech," public opinion condemned his majesty and defended Wilkes. Popular sympathy with this persecuted demagogue rose to fever heat. He was triumphantly elected to Parliament by the free-holders of Middlesex. The king's servile majority in the House of Commons, in defiance of law, expelled him. His expulsion made him the representative of a principle which is the corner-stone of English liberty—the right of the people to elect whom they will to represent them in the House of Commons. For his heroic defense of this principle through several years of bitter and cruel persecution Wilkes became the idol of the people. Supported by popular enthusiasm without, and by great Chatham, Burke, and the Whigs inside both Houses of Parliament, he finally triumphed over his royal persecutor. And, to cite Mr. Gladstone, "whether we choose it or not, Wilkes must be enrolled among the great champions of English freedom."

Remembering that Fox became one of the most prominent advocates of political liberty known to English history, one is at a loss fully to explain

why he sided with the king and won his earliest reputation for oratory by his speeches against Wilkes. Had he been silent, his frivolous and dissipated life might be accepted as its cause, since a sensual life usually causes indifference to great principles and lofty sentiments. But Fox made speeches which implied attention and reflection on the questions which were convulsing the nation. How then could his mind, which in subsequent years responded, as by intuition, to every noble sentiment and liberal political theory, see rectitude in the policy of the king, or help seeing unqualified wrong in the expulsion of Wilkes by the House of Commons? Was he playing the hypocrite? One is unwilling to accept so disreputable a solution. Is it not more probable that he was yet governed by his purpose to be a placeman and a partisan of the Crown; that this purpose, dominating both his intellect and moral sentiments, kept him from viewing this or any other great question on its own merits, and led him to look no further than to find the best arguments within reach of his mind with which to defend the policy of the Crown? Viewed in any light, his early Parliamentary career was utterly out of harmony with his later life; nor, as Lord John Russell observes, "did it give any promise of that

strenuous contest for freedom to which he afterward devoted his eloquence and his life."

It did, however, contain the promise of that wonderful power in debate which made his name famous. One wonders at that calm courage and self-reliance which enabled him, while yet a young man of twenty, new to the House and its usages, to take the floor and make a speech on so uninspiring a theme as a point of order. This maiden speech, if without other effect, taught him not to be alarmed at the sound of his own voice; and his air and manner so charmed an artist who was present, that, the use of paper in the House being forbidden in those days, he "tore off part of his shirt, and furtively sketched a likeness of the young declaimer, on which, in after days, those who were fondest of him set not a little store."

A few weeks later, on April 14, 1769, Fox plunged into the great debate in the Wilkes case, with Burke for an opponent. "He won the attention of all, and the admiration of most, by a fluency and fire which promised better things." In a still more stirring debate, in a crowded House, after speeches by the learned Wedderburn and the eloquent Burke, he made a speech against the right of the electors of Middlesex to elect Wilkes, which

astonished both friends and foes. The succeeding January he won the applause of the House by his reply to an impressive speech of Wedderburn's, in which that acute lawyer affirmed that there was no precedent for the action proposed by the majority. Fox immediately produced a case in point, and "the House roared with applause." A month later the prime minister, Lord North, recognized the value of his services to his party by appointing him one of the junior Lords of the Admiralty.

It could not be reasonably expected that Fox, who had never known constraint, who was abundantly supplied with money from the vast resources of his father, whose independent, ambitious soul refused to be bound with a chain, would long submit to be led by the arbitrary will of a narrow-minded king. Nor did he; for, after retaining his place only two years, he resigned it that he might be at liberty to oppose the Royal Marriage Act, which was intended to restrain members of the royal family from marrying subjects, by requiring the royal consent in order to their legitimacy. Fox's high sense of honor forbade him, while in office, to oppose a measure which the king favored and the premier was obliged to support. His opposition did not prevent the passage of the Act, but it led to its

modification, so far as to permit such marriages without the king's consent, after the parties had reached the age of six and twenty, unless both Houses of Parliament disapproved.

Fox also brought in a bill to correct an old marriage bill, to which Lord North professed to be, if not favorable, at least indifferent. Fox sustained his motion with amazing "spirit and memory," wrote Lord Oxford, against the rhetoric of Burke and the arguments of Lord North, who, in violation of his promise to be silent, finally entered the lists against him, but was beaten by a close vote when the House divided.

In acting thus independently of his party leader, Fox not only disclaimed a purpose to enter the ranks of the Opposition, but avowed his firm faith in the principles of Lord North. Hence, a few months later, he was in office again as one of the commissioners of the treasury. But the charm of office, ambitious as he was to be in it, was not strong enough to subdue his daring spirit, which was formed, not to follow, but to lead. Having persuaded North to support his motion to commit Woodfall, the printer of Horne Tooke's sharp criticisms on the speaker of the House of Commons, to Newgate, he led that vacillating politician into the

disgrace of a bad defeat. The king, on learning the ill fortune of his servile minister, was "greatly incensed at the presumption of Charles Fox," who, he said, had "thoroughly cast off every principle of common honor and honesty; he must become as contemptible as he is odious." This outburst of royal wrath was speedily followed by a laconic note from Lord North to Fox, saying: "His majesty has thought proper to order a new commission of the treasury to be made out, in which I do not see your name!"

This politely worded insult deeply wounded the self-respect of the young orator. It opened his eyes to see that, to be a placeman under the reigning sovereign, he must needs become a political slave. No member of the House of Commons had rendered more effectual service in support of the measures designed to suppress freedom of speech, to fetter the press, to restrict the liberties of the people, and to encourage corruption at the "hustings." So recklessly and insultingly had he spoken in favor of the arbitrary claims of the crown, and against the rights of the people that, says Trevelyan, "for his age, he was the most unpopular man, not only in England, but in English history." He had a severe demonstration of his unpopularity while the proceedings against Woodfall and Horne

Tooke were pending. Goaded to the point of riot by the measures of the House, a vast crowd of the citizens of London surged around the approaches to St. Stephen's. Presently the carriage of Fox, bearing the arms of the Holland family on its panels, made its appearance. No sooner was he recognized than his horses were stopped, his carriage wrecked, and his gayly-attired person pelted with oranges, stones, and mud, and finally rolled in the gutter. Yet, although by his brilliant and effective championship of the policy of the crown, he made himself the object of the popular contempt expressed by these violent proceedings, the king, who had never trusted him, had turned him out of office because, in a few instances, he had acted independently of the royal will.

Mr. Trevelyan, remarking on this critical period in his life, says, "If, at an age when his character was still malleable, his premature ambition had been tempted by the offer of the highest place in the state he might have gone down to the execration of posterity as the Wentworth of the eighteenth century." He might certainly, because ambition is a passion whose corrupting influence is often potent even in noble natures. But Fox had this in his favor—he was neither sordid nor avaricious, and

therefore not attracted to a placeman's career by its pecuniary profits. Neither was he supremely selfish. On the contrary, he was generous and disinterested when appeals were addressed to the noble side of his nature. It was his instinctive perception of these latter qualities that made the king distrust Fox from the start. The Tory leaders shared the mistrust of their royal master. On the other hand, Burke, Rockingham, and other Whig statesmen saw in these qualities ground for a belief that their vehement opponent would, sooner or later, feel the inspiration of great principles, and become a leader in their contest for the maintenance of the theory of parliamentary government established by the Revolution of 1688. Their expectation was justified. Fox did, after five years of partisan efforts, embrace patriotic principles with a grasp so firm, with a persistence so enduring, and an earnestness so absorbing, that one loves to think the highest office in the gift of the crown, though it might have delayed, would not have prevented his becoming "the man of the people."

Among the principal causes which were working to produce the great change in his political character, which became apparent after his expulsion from office, was the friendship of Burke, who

was strongly drawn to him while he was yet a champion of the king's policy. Their friendly conversations made Fox acquainted with Burke's liberal principles, for the reception of which his mind was prepared by his occasional studies. Taine, in his "History of English Literature," says that Fox "learned every thing without study." That eloquent writer was mistaken. Fox, in spite of idle habits and vicious amusements, was at times an ardent student of English history, of constitutional law, and of the Greek, Italian, and English poets. They, with Burke's conversations, were the fountains whence flowed those great principles and noble sentiments which, after quickening his slumbering patriotism into life, sustained his chivalric courage through long, dreary years of parliamentary defeat, and gave his oratory a power more dreaded by the enemies of political freedom than the more polished eloquence of Burke or the impassioned flights of Sheridan.

Lord North's insulting note marks the terminal point of Fox's advocacy of theories adverse to popular liberty. Disgusted with his treatment he ceased at once to be a place-hunter, and began to look around for nobler aims. Nor had he long to wait or far to look. A question of immeasurable

importance to the interests of mankind invited his attention. The people of America were preparing to throw down the gauntlet of defiance to the claim of right on the part of the English Government to tax them without their consent. They had repudiated the Stamp Act, thrown the contents of the tea-ships into Boston harbor, assembled a Congress, and were preparing to accept the dread wager of battle, if the mother country persisted in pressing her unjust claims. Then Fox, emancipated by the act of the king from all obligation to view the question from the standpoint of a partisan, and impressed by the sublime spectacle of a few feeble colonies deliberately preparing to defend their liberties on the field of battle, against the might of England's army and navy, grasped the great principles involved in the coming conflict with a giant's strength. In a telling speech he warned the crown of the consequences of its false policy; saying to its representatives, "If you persist, I am clearly of the opinion you will force them"—the Americans—"into open rebellion." In another speech he bravely declared, that the line of conduct pursued by the government toward America consisted of "violence and weakness." And when, at the opening of a new session of Parliament in the Winter of 1775,

Lord North moved a resolution urging the king to employ force to maintain his policy in America, Fox offered a substitute, praying his majesty speedily to change his policy. Rising to the height of the great occasion, he supported his motion by a masterly speech, protesting against proceeding to war. So broad and elevated was this speech that Gibbon, the historian, who was present, said that it took in the "vast compass of the question, and discovered powers for regular debate which neither his friends hoped nor his enemies had dreaded."

Chatham opposed the king's policy of using force against the Americans. So, also, did Lord Rockingham, the leader of the Whig party, and Burke, whose magnificent oratory was the wonder of the House. But neither of those great statesmen looked as deeply into the principles of our Revolution as Fox. Chatham, while affirming that England had no right to tax America, maintained that she had unlimited power to fetter its trade. Rockingham and Burke did not deny the right of England to tax, but opposed the policy of enforcing it. Fox went to the root of the question, denying the right, condemning the policy, and predicting the independence of the colonies as the certain issue of the war. His advocacy of these views gave

a far higher character to his speeches than could be claimed for those he made while he was a free lance and a partisan. Then they had excited wonder and admiration, but did not command confidence and respect; now their depth, breadth, and real earnestness proclaimed him to be a man inspired by clear, strong political convictions. His bold abandonment of the party in power illustrated his disinterestedness. As a result, although he still retained the vices of his youth, he gradually won the respect and confidence of those illustrious men who were contending for parliamentary independence and for justice to America. He chose to stand bravely fighting for the right, without allying himself to any party for two or three years; but, in 1778, under the leadership of Lord Rockingham in the Upper House, he joined the Whigs, and became their recognized leader in the House of Commons.

The Tory majority in the House was so large, and so strongly supported by the crown, the aristocracy, and the wealthy classes generally, that Fox was the leader of what appeared to be "a forlorn hope." But he had faith in his principles, in the Americans, and in himself. His courage was inexhaustible. Though his little band was constantly defeated, he never quailed; never yielded to dis-

couragement, though at times many, not excepting Lord Rockingham, were disposed to let the majority carry out its policy unopposed. But Fox, with marvelous elasticity of spirit, constantly renewed the fight after every failure to carry the House. His eloquence gathered fresh fuel from defeat. He censured the measures of the ministry in scorching philippics; he warned the king with boldness, almost amounting to audacity; he demanded the discontinuance of the war; and, after Cornwallis surrendered, he insisted on recognizing unconditionally the independence of the triumphant colonies, without waiting for the re-establishment of peace with France.

When Cornwallis fell, in 1782, Lord North resigned his premiership. Lord Rockingham succeeded him. The king, conquered by circumstances, consented to the formation of a ministry in which Fox should hold the portfolio of secretary of state for foreign affairs. Horace Walpole, by no means a friendly witness, says of his administration of this high office: "Fox shone as greatly in place as in opposition. He was now as indefatigable as he formerly was idle. . . . The foreign ministers admired him. He pleased, yet inspired respect." He set himself most zealously and judiciously to

secure peace both with France and America. He had scarcely gathered the delicate threads of the needful diplomacy into his hands when the death of Lord Rockingham, and the secret intrigues of a minority of the cabinet, who were, at heart, opposed to him, led Fox to resign his office.

This step was regarded as a political blunder by many of his friends. It also injured his prestige with the people, because its motives could not be given to the public without putting in peril the pending question of peace with France and America. It was attributed by some to his jealousy of Shelburne, secretary for home affairs; but the facts in the case seem to show that Shelburne had dishonorably meddled, through a secret agent, with the diplomacy of Fox at Paris. Disgusted with this interference, he could not harmonize his continuance in office with his self-respect, so long as Shelburne remained in the cabinet. His act was, no doubt, unfortunate in its results. It wrought injury to his party, to the country, and to himself.

In the Spring of 1783 the House, led by Fox, censured the preliminaries of peace just accepted at Paris, and approved by the Shelburne ministry, which at once resigned. Then the friends of Lord North proposed a coalition ministry to Fox and

his fellow Whigs. After much hesitation Fox accepted the proposal, and became secretary of state a second time, in the cabinet of which the duke of Portand was premier, and Lord North secretary for home affairs.

This proved to be a second and serious political blunder on the part of Fox. Not that either he or North made any real sacrifice of principle, or that Fox, though broken in fortune by dissipation, sought the profits of a placeman; but because his coalition with a man against whom he had thundered so many philippics, and whose administration was burdened with the disgrace of military and parliamentary defeats, put Fox in a false position before the public. Many of his Whig friends, too, were dissatisfied, and Fox himself confessed that it was an act which, politically considered, could only be justified by its success and the benefits to the country which he hoped it might secure.

This coalition was a bitter pill to the king, who made no attempt to conceal his dislike of Fox and his contempt of North. But the king's discontent did not hinder Fox from entering zealously upon the duties of his office. Neither did it prevent the discovery by foreign governments of his transcendent abilities, nor keep him, with the assistance of

Burke's erudition and commanding eloquence, from carrying a bill for the better government of India triumphantly through the House of Commons. To prevent its passage in the House of Lords the king deputed Lord Temple to make it understood that he would regard every peer who should vote for the bill as an enemy of the crown. This unwarrantable use of royal influence succeeded. The Lords threw out the bill. His majesty forthwith commanded Fox and North to send their seals of office to the palace by the hands of their under-secretary. Thus the ill-starred coalition fell to pieces. Fox was out of office again, and his great rival, William Pitt, entered a new cabinet as first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer.

Though out of office, Fox continued to be leader of a majority in the House of Commons until the king dissolved the Parliament at the close of 1784. A new election followed. It resulted in a complete overthrow of the party of Fox, which lost one hundred and sixty members. Fox himself was returned for Westminster. But he was destined henceforth to be the brilliant opponent of the administration, and the leader of a minority which, but for himself and Burke, would have had very little influence on public affairs.

Fox met the unexpected defeat of his party with that firmness which is the impenetrable shield of great minds conscious of patriotic purposes. Writing to an intimate friend, shortly after, he proudly said: "I have never sacrificed my principles to popularity or ambition. . . . I would rather be rejected, reprobated, proscribed. I would rather be an outcast of men in power, and the follower of the most insignificant ministry, than prostitute myself into the character of a mean tool of secret influence."

These noble words were sincere, and had their justification in his actions when properly understood. They were also prophetic. From that time, 1784, until 1806, he was proscribed by the crown and the Tories, quite generally condemned by public opinion, and followed by only an insignificant minority. Nevertheless, his honor was untarnished, his courage undismayed, and his eloquence as commanding as ever. Though in opposition, neither the majority nor Pitt, its haughty and sagacious leader, dared despise him; nor was his opposition factious, but patriotic, and even generous, inasmuch as he supported his great rival's measures whenever he thought them right and judicious. But when, after 1792, Pitt, in his stern endeavors to

suppress the Jacobin spirit which was projected from France into England, became the advocate of arbitrary government and of cruel laws adverse to civil liberty, Fox stood up against him as a wall of brass. His study of the theories of human rights as embodied in the American Revolution, had prepared him to sympathize most fully with the French in their struggles to overthrow the despotism of their corrupt monarchy. So deep and strong was his sympathy, that it outlasted the first period of the French Revolution, and commanded his adhesion after it entered upon its period of blood-thirsty fanaticism. He did not, he could not, approve its crimes, but he continued to avow his faith in its principles long after the great body of English statesmen and intelligent citizens had turned against it with horror. When, under the leadership of the Girondins, it resolved itself into a sytem of democratic propagandism by the sword, and Pitt led his government into open war, Fox raised his ringing voice in opposition. So persistent, so decided, was his demand for peace, that he exasperated public opinion, sacrificed the friendship of Burke, and offended the greater number of his old friends and followers. Subsequent events demonstrated that the policy of England, especially

its resistance to the march of Napoleon toward the dictatorship of Europe, was sound and just. Fox, though sincere, was wrong, as, indeed, he subsequently confessed, inasmuch as but for English gold and British blood Napoleon would, in all probability, have become undisputed master of all Continental Europe, if not of England also.

Fox battled bravely, if not always wisely, in opposition until 1797, when, disgusted with the subserviency of Parliament to ministerial dictation, and left without followers sufficient to keep up an efficient opposition, he discontinued his regular attendance on the House of Commons, and retired to his estate in the neighborhood of London, which was named St. Anne's Hill, and consisted of thirty acres of land and a small mansion. Here, abandoning his former habits of dissipation, he lived quietly in the society of his wife, whom he tenderly loved; devoting himself to agriculture, to the study of poetry and criticism, especially of the Greek tragedians, and to the composition of a "History of the Revolution of 1688"—a work, by the way, which, though able, added no luster to his great reputation. His life at St. Anne's Hill is described by his private secretary, Mr. John B. Trotter, as calm, tranquil, and happy. Like his father, he was a kind and gentle

husband. His manners were simple, his disposition genial and placable. In conversation, at this period of his life, he was more reserved than in his early years; yet he was sufficiently free to be a very agreeable companion in the domestic and social circles.

In 1806 the death of Pitt compelled the king to invite Lord Grenville to form a new ministry. This nobleman consented to do so on the condition that Fox should take the office of secretary for foreign affairs. To this the king, notwithstanding his deep-seated prejudices, consented. The people were getting sick of a war which, up to this period, had cost them many millions of money, with but little honor except from the victories of the navy. Fox entered on his duties with a purpose to bring about an honorable peace, if possible, with a zeal which "gave his office a soul;" with a skill in organizing his methods of working which so impressed the king that, in spite of his foolish dislike to the secretary, he confessed that "the office was never conducted in such a manner before."

But the great orator's work was done, though not before he had reached the conviction that peace, with honor, was not attainable, because of Napoleon's insatiable and unprincipled ambition: A

mortal disease was poisoning the fountains of his life. Between the middle of June and the 13th of September he suffered "intolerable pains," and underwent repeated surgical operations, which he bore with courage, serenity, and self-possession. His chief anxiety was not for himself, but for his wife, for whose future support, owing to his costly vices, he had not been able to make suitable provision. He kept his mind from dwelling on his sufferings or on his approaching death, by listening to the daily reading of Johnson's "Lives of the Poets" by Mr. Trotter, his private secretary, and by commenting on that writer's estimate of his favorite poets.

A short time before his death a young clergyman, called in by his friends, read prayers by his bedside. Fox listened quietly, with a look of resignation, but made no remark. Of his religious views and opinions little is known beyond Mr. Trotter's statement that he had "never observed the slightest inclination to doubt or unbelief;" that Fox "never meddled with abstruse and mysterious points in religion," but that he was "tolerant, benignant, and never disrepectful toward religion;" and that during his illness he "resigned himself to his Creator with calmness." Fox avowed that he

felt no remorse. He expressed no desire for the pardon of his many sins. In the supreme moment he exclaimed, "I die happy!" and then passed into the invisible.

Evidently Fox had never cultivated the religious side of his nature. His assertion that he felt no remorse, viewed in connection with his many vices, is proof that his moral sense was also very partially developed. Nevertheless, paradoxical as it appears, it must be conceded that his life was adorned with many natural virtues. He possessed a courage which nothing could daunt. He was often grand in his magnanimity. He was conspicuously true to his friends, and, after the first five years of his public life, incorruptibly loyal to his convictions. He held lies and liars in supreme contempt. He abhorred corruption, intrigue, and hypocrisy. His heart was a fountain of generous sentiment, out of which flowed his sunny temper, his lovable disposition, and also his hostility to the slave-trade, to war, to political oppression, and to religious intolerance. Nature had given him a noble mind. Had it been rightly trained; had its evil tendencies been checked, instead of nourished, by his unprincipled father; had religious affections become the guides and motives of his natural vir-

tues, his character would have grown into a grandeur rarely paralleled in human history.

Alison eulogizes Fox as "the greatest debater that the English Parliament ever produced." Macaulay remarks, "He was, indeed, *a* great orator, but then he was *the* great debater." Lord Erskine shows that he possessed two prime qualifications of an orator—vigorous conceptions and a firm, sure grasp of the great principles involved in the question treated. His memory was astonishingly quick and ready, and his ability to gather information from every source available for his purpose was truly wonderful. He was not endowed with the deep feeling and grand imagination which made great Chatham's eloquence "like flashes from heaven;" his rhetoric was less magnificent and brilliant than Burke's. Sheridan had more passion and more abounding humor; the younger Pitt excelled him in logical acuteness; nevertheless his power of transparent statement, his ability to present a question in all its aspects, and to bring the reasoning of his opponent to the test of clearly defined and admitted principles; his vehement earnestness; and his rare geniality, which nothing could ruffle, gave him a measure of power over the understandings, the judgments, and the feelings of his hearers never

surpassed by any other parliamentary orator. In impromptu debate he had no equal.

The influence of Fox over the course of events was inferior to that of his great rival Pitt, who far excelled him in sagacity, in practical statesmanship, and in parliamentary tact. The part taken by Fox in his opposition to the war of England with her American colonies made him a radical democrat with respect to the principles of human liberty. These radical theories, which were in advance of his times, gave a certain vagueness to his political ideas when he attempted to incorporate them into a legislative system founded on aristocratic principles. Hence, it was not Fox, but the more practically sagacious Pitt, who held the helm of English affairs during the greater part of the public career of both. Nevertheless, as the sower of seed thoughts which took root in the national mind, and which have subsequently greatly modified English law, enlarged the liberties of its people, circumscribed the power of the crown, and made the British House of Commons the real ruler of that country, he was superior to all the statesmen and orators of his eventful times.

OLIVER CROMWELL.

VII.

OLIVER CROMWELL.

The Patriotic Statesman and Soldier.

"Genius which discerns
And courage which achieves despise the aid
Of lingering circumspection. The keen spirit
Seizes the prompt occasion, makes the thought
Start into instant action and, at once,
Plans and performs, resolves and executes."

—Hannah More.

OLIVER CROMWELL, Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, was born April 25, 1599, at Huntingdon. His father, Robert Cromwell, was the younger son of Sir Henry Cromwell, "the golden knight," who dwelt "in rather sumptuous fashion at the mansion of Hinchinbrook hard by." His mother, Elizabeth Steward, was the daughter of an opulent gentleman of the town of Ely. Thus his descent, despite the misrepresentations of royalist writers, was eminently respectable and honorable.

Of Cromwell's early life very little is certainly known. The influences which molded his character and gave direction to his grand career can, therefore, only be inferred from what is known of his home and family. That his childhood was spent in a home made comfortable and agreeable by moderate wealth, by the quiet virtues of his father, the energetic housewifery of his affectionate mother, the gentleness, if not tenderness, of his seven sisters, and the best society of the neighborhood, is tolerably certain. Royalist traducers of his memory have painted his boyish character with pencils dipped in colors made black by their malice. According to them he was rough, violent, quarrelsome, a robber of orchards, and given to vulgar brawling in the streets with the bad boys of the village. They give point to their charges by representing that, when the children of King James I were entertained at his uncle's mansion of Hinchinbrook, while on their way from Scotland to London, young Oliver quarreled with them and drew blood from the royal nose of the future King Charles. This story is, no doubt, apocryphal. It rests on no evidence. It is improbable that a small boy, trained by a gentle mother, and in daily companionship with so many sisters, should have been so violent to royal

children during the few hours of their stay at his uncle's mansion. That he was active, energetic, bold, fearless of danger, and possibly boisterous at times, is suggested by his subsequent character; but, knowing that his sterner traits were always modified by a vein of almost feminine tenderness, one can not rid one's self of the belief that, in his boyhood, he was not the rude, ungentle creature of the royalist's imagination. Is not the boy the father of the man?

Cromwell's school education was directed by Dr. Beard, a clergyman well disposed toward the Puritans, and headmaster of the Huntingdon Grammar School. Oliver's enemies allege that he was not a persistent student, but a boy who was studious one day and idle the next. This could scarcely be, since he went directly from this school to Cambridge University when only seventeen years old. Though not particularly fond of study, he must have made a fair use of his school opportunities or he could not have passed the university examinations. Assuredly, though profound scholarship was not his forte, Oliver was no dullard.

In April, 1616, he was admitted as a "fellow-commoner" to Cambridge University, where he found himself among strangers for the first time in

his life. His stay there was short. One year later his father died, and not long after Oliver, of his own choice, quitted that seat of learning for the purpose of taking care of his mother and sisters. As to his college work and behavior nothing is known. His enemies affirmed that, while there, he was more famous for cudgeling and roystering than for study; but the probability is that, though he was more fond of athletic sports than of close application to his books, he was, nevertheless, sufficiently studious "to become somewhat proficient in the Latin language." This supposition rests on the testimony of foreign ambassadors years after, who stated that he was in the habit of conversing with them in Latin. Had he wasted his one college year in idle sports he could not have acquired such proficiency in that language as is implied by his ability to use it, after so many years, in diplomatic conversation.

He is now eighteen years old, a boy in years, but a man in spirit. His judicious mother advises him to spend a year or two in London with some legal friend, that he may fit himself wisely to manage his own and her business affairs. Accepting her counsel, he spends two years in that thriving city. What he learns there we do not know; but

it is certain that, while there, he is a constant guest at the mansion of his kinsman, Sir James Bourchier, a merchant prince, whose daughter Elizabeth becomes the object of his affections, and, in August, 1620, his chosen bride. His mother approved his choice, and received the young lady with true maternal welcome when he took her home. His sisters were equally cordial, and, for the next eleven years, they all lived as one family, in the harmony of a mutual affection creditable to the reputation of all parties and utterly, irreconcilable with royalist portrayals of Oliver's alleged evil character.

Cromwell now becomes a prosperous farmer, a judicious magistrate, a congenial neighbor, a thoughtful man, quietly observing passing events, and, after several years, giving himself to serious reflections upon his soul and his spiritual destiny. These high thoughts begot profound convictions, fierce temptations, despairing heart quakings, and led, in the end, to his conversion. He became a Christian man who, says Carlyle, "believed in God, not on Sundays only, but all the days of the week, and in all cases." Puritan influences had guided him into this experience, and henceforth Oliver acted openly with the Puritan party.

When he was twenty-nine years old his fellow-

townsmen expressed their estimate of his worth by electing him to represent the town of Huntingdon in King Charles's third Parliament. The times were troublous. Charles I was foolishly bent on governing England with despotic disregard of his people's rights, and of the will of Parliament, on the plea that the right to rule with absolute authority was the divine prerogative of kings. The people of England thought otherwise. The mutterings of that discontent which was to end in war and in the decapitation of Charles were already in the air. The Parliament, in which Oliver first appeared, gave strong voice to the popular feeling, and was angrily dissolved by the king after a brief existence of one year. Cromwell made only one short speech on a question involving certain papal tendencies in the Church. It was pointed and sound, but excited no expectation in any mind that its author was the "coming man" in the terrible contest between the monarch and his people, which the king's obstinate folly was forcing on the nation.

Returning to his farm, Cromwell resumed its cultivation. Two years later he sold it, and invested the proceeds in stocking a grazing farm which he rented at St. Ives, five miles from Huntingdon, where he lived five years. The death of his

maternal uncle, whose property he inherited, next led him to reside at Ely. While there a strife arose between the people of his neighborhood and the royal commissioners for draining the fens. Oliver took sides with the people, and led the controversy with such vigor and success that they gave him the popular title of "lord of the fens."

In 1640 we find him in the famous Long Parliament, in which he represents the town of Cambridge. He is now forty-one years old. His appearance in the House is described by a prejudiced witness, who says he was clad in very ordinary clothing and plain linen, with a sword "stuck close to his side. His stature is of good size, his countenance swollen and reddish, his voice sharp and untunable, and his eloquence full of fervor." It need not surprise us, though it did this Sir Philip Warwick, that, despite his unpolished exterior and unmusical voice, this fervid gentleman was "greatly hearkened unto." "Cromwell was never an orator," but his words were the outflow of an impassioned soul. His earnestness acted on their patriotism and religious faith as the flint does when it strikes the steel. It kindled fire in every Puritan's breast, and the men who knew him best now began to perceive the greatness of his character. Lord

Digby, after hearing part of this same speech, asked, "who is the sloven who spoke to-day?" The astute John Hampden, who was Cromwell's cousin, promptly replied, "That sloven hath no ornament in his speech. But, if we should ever come to a breach with the king—which, God forbid!—that sloven, I tell you, will be the greatest man in England."

This was prophetic as to Cromwell. The breach with the king was forced on the unwilling Parliament, which he had stubbornly refused to summon until, by his arbitrary measures, he had driven Scotland into armed rebellion in defense of its religious freedom. Even then he had raised troops and made forced levies and loans of money for their support; but, unable to procure men sufficient to subdue the Scots, he made terms with them. He had, in truth, exhausted the patience and worn out the loyalty of his people. His extremity became the nation's opportunity. The new Parliament, while not seeking a conflict, was resolved to protect its legal rights against the illegal encroachments of the crown. Come what might, it would not permit the continuance of the king's exercise of irresponsible power. Alarmed by its stern determination, Charles reluctantly signed numerous acts to which he was,

at heart, hostile. He even put his name to the death warrant of Strafford, his favorite adviser, and to a bill putting it out of his power to dissolve Parliament without its own consent.

But this foolish king was not sincere, and the strife went on. At last, in a grand remonstrance, Parliament stated its grievances, asked redress, and demanded guarantees for the future. Charles was in a rage. Instead of yielding to the gathering storm of public indignation he demanded the arrest of Hampden and several other Puritan leaders. Parliament ordered the obnoxious gentlemen to seek safety in the city. Then the angry king entered the House of Commons at the head of his palace guard and personal attendants, with an intention to seize the offending members in their seats. Disappointed on finding them absent, pale with vexation, the defeated monarch drove the speaker from his chair, gazed angrily around the House, and not knowing how further to vent his wrath, sullenly retired to his palace. This rude insult to the representatives of .the nation was a blunder which exasperated public feeling, and brought the impending revolution to a crisis. Apprehensive of personal danger from the wrath of the excited citizens of London the king, with his court, quits his

palace a few days later, travels north to York, and prepares for war. Parliament, after some further, but vain, attempts to bring him to terms, adopts sundry ordinances having the same end in view. Royalists and Puritans are on the brink of a fratricidal conflict to determine whether England shall be governed by law, through a Parliament, or by the will of a despotic king.

Up to this time Cromwell was evidently without any clearly defined policy with respect to the future of the government, and without ambition for power, without prospects of personal distinction. He had made few speeches, but had done much patient work on committees, especially on questions relating to religious liberty. Regarding prelacy and Romanism as the enemies of genuine Christian faith, and as political allies of kingcraft, he had supported some measures that involved more or less of that intolerance which he was seeking to overthrow. Yet, on the whole, his attitude was that of an intensely earnest Christian man, working enthusiastically for the cause of religion and for the liberties of his country. The key-note of his life was given in these words, written to a friend early in his Parliamentary career: "My soul is with the congregation of the firstborn. . . . If here

I may honor God either by doing or suffering, I shall be most glad." These pregnant sentences make it evident that, from this time, he conceived of politics and statesmanship as consisting chiefly in the faithful and fearless application of the principles of religion to the government of his country.

Cromwell's mind was eminently practical. It perceived intuitively what means were best fitted to attain a desired end. When convinced that the thing to be done was right, he threw all the forces of his strong nature into an effort to do it. Hence it was that, as soon as war was inevitable, his character began to reveal itself. Money being needed to raise a Parliamentary army, he promptly contributed liberally for that purpose. Associations of the counties for defense and military organization being ordered, he hastened to his county and speedily raised a company of cavalry, of which he was appointed captain. It being rumored that the king was about to seize some ammunition stored in the castle at Cambridge, and to confiscate the costly plate owned by the university, he anticipated that illegal movement by one equally unlawful, yet in the interest of liberty. He captured the ammunition for the use of the Parliamentary forces, and forbade the university giving its plate to King

Charles. And when, in the first serious conflict between the royalist and Puritan troops at Edgehill, in 1642, he perceived that the soldiers of the latter, taken, as they had been, from the lower orders of the people, were unfitted to combat successfully with the high-bred cavaliers who followed the standard of King Charles, he said to John Hampden:

"Your troops are most of them old serving-men and tapsters, and such kind of fellows; and their troops are gentlemen's sons and persons of quality. Do you think that the spirits of such base and mean fellows will ever be able to encounter men that have honor and courage and resolution in them? You must get men of a spirit that is likely to go as far as gentlemen will go, or else you will be beaten still."

This was a judgment founded on his finely developed common sense, and on his religious convictions. The former showed him that ignorance, stupidity, and hereditary stolidity are unfairly matched when brought into conflict with intelligence, mental vigor, and a high sense of honor, quickened by hereditary pride of family; the latter taught him that a conviction of one's providential call to fight for truth and liberty, such as he felt in his own breast, was able to make men of ordinary

intelligence equal to the proudest cavaliers. Acting on this conclusion which, under his circumstances, must be accepted as an inspiration of genius, he proceeded to organize a regiment of cavalry, composed of religious men belonging to the yeomanry, whom he enlisted in the neighborhood of his own residence, where he was almost universally popular. Of this famous regiment, the first of those invincible troops subsequently known as the *Ironsides*, he became colonel. He took pains, not only with their instruction in military duties, but also, and chiefly, with their moral training. They were enlisted to do a righteous work. He insisted that they should themselves be righteous men. And it is historically certain that it was their fighting, animated by their religious spirit, which overthrew the king and gave existence to the Commonwealth.

Cromwell must have been a born soldier. Trained to peaceful pursuits, he had never studied the art of war. But, from the first hour of his military career to his final battle, he displayed the highest qualities of generalship; as, by intuition, he always saw the vulnerable point in his adversary's position, and the surest means of carrying it. He never hesitated to attempt what he saw ought to be done. In quickness, decision, and

celerity of movement he was Napoleonic. The energy, the impetuosity of his attack was irresistible. His Ironsides marched into battle singing hymns and praying to the God of battles. They hewed their way to victory under the inspiration of a belief that they were doing the will of God and working out the salvation of their country.

Hence it was that, in the battle of Edgehill, mentioned above, it was the right wing, where Cromwell was stationed, that held its ground and prevented that drawn battle from ending in the rout of the Parliamentary army. It was his Ironsides, of whom he was colonel, who, by capturing Lowestoft, prevented Prince Rupert from disorganizing the "Eastern Counties' Association," which fact had a decisive influence on the future success of the Puritan movement. It was he who, at Winceby Hamlet, led his men in a charge so fierce and effective that, in half an hour, it ended in the utter rout of the foe, of whom one thousand were killed, one thousand made prisoners, and two thousand horses captured—a victory which foreshadowed his coming greatness, and made his name eminent throughout all England.

In the battle of Marston Moor, fought July 2, 1644, Cromwell commanded the left wing of the

Parliamentary army. Prince Rupert led the right wing of the royal army. This dashing cavalier was eager to test the mettle of Cromwell and his Ironsides. His confidence in his ability to trample them out with his aristocratic Life Guards was quickly transmuted into blank despair when, after a brief hand-to-hand struggle between the vanguards of both armies, Cromwell, at the head of his men, dashed through his vaunting adversary's ranks, and "scattered them before him like dust." Cromwell's wing was victorious, but the right wing and center of the Parliamentary army was beaten. Fortunately, Oliver had given timely check to his pursuit of Prince Rupert's flying horsemen, and was returning to the field of strife when he learned of this disaster. Nothing daunted, he rallied fragments of the flying Puritan regiments, as he was able to come up with them, and with them, and his victorious Ironsides he formed a new line of battle. The royalists charged them fiercely, but making no impression on Cromwell's unconquerable horsemen, recoiled. Then Oliver led his Ironsides in a charge so fierce and terrible that the king's troops broke and fled. Out of twenty thousand royalist soldiers who engaged in that fatal battle not more than three thousand could be rallied at its

close. "To Cromwell belonged the chief glory of the victory."

The other generals of the Puritan army, Essex, Waller, and Manchester were unfortunate or tardy. Cromwell, therefore, after openly censuring Manchester in Parliament, proposed an ordinance discharging members of Parliament from military service, remodeling the army, and permitting enlistments of men without requiring them to sign the "covenant" as recruits had been forced to do by a law passed to secure the support of the Scots in the field, and to gain the good will of their Presbyterian sympathizers in England. One result of this last change was to bring into their ranks large numbers of men who, being Independents in their Church preferences and fervidly religious in feeling, had heretofore refused to enlist. And their presence, while it alienated the Scots, intensified the moral tone of the whole army, making it worthy to fight side by side with those redoubtable Ironside regiments.

Cromwell's military reputation was now so exceptionally great that, at the request of Fairfax, their commander-in-chief, the House requested him to continue in the field as second in command, notwithstanding their recent act removing members

of Parliament from such service. He consented, aware, as he must have been by this time, that they had no other general likely to push the war with that measure of energy which he perceived was essential to its final success. Indeed, both the army and the Parliament were now fully convinced that his military services were indispensable. In the next campaign of 1645, he more than sustained his high reputation by a series of rapid and brilliant movements, which culminated on the celebrated field of Naseby, where, on the 14th of June, the royal army was literally "beaten to pieces, . . . and the first civil war virtually brought to an end. Cromwell and his army decided, as usual, the fate of the day." As at Marston, so at Naseby, the royalists drove back one wing and the center of the Puritan army; but Cromwell's wing, composed of six regiments of horse, routed the force directly opposed to it; then, rallying its beaten portions, Cromwell, in a final attack, pushed King Charles and his soldiers to a flight so disastrous, that what was left of them was no longer an army, but a mob of fugitives. "Sir," wrote Cromwell to the speaker of the House of Commons, "this is none other than the hand of God."

Oliver, after this Naseby victory, with almost

incredible speed, captured all the towns, including Bristol, still held by royalist forces. The king was ruined, Parliament was triumphant. Yet the peace of the country was not assured. Sectarian bitterness had caused Parliament to become a house divided against itself. Its Presbyterian members sought national recognition and support for their ecclesiastical system. London very largely sympathized with them, as also did many other places. The unprincipled king tried to engage these sectaries, with the Scots, in a new war, making promises which he did not intend to keep. The army was largely composed of Independents, and very much determined not to permit the substitution of Presbyterianism for prelacy. It would have neither. Hence, there arose stormy debates in the House of Commons, great unrest throughout the country, and, after a time, a conflict between the Puritan army and Parliament, in which the former triumphed. Next came a royalist revolt in Wales, and the gathering of a Scottish army in the North, both seeking to reinstate the king. Cromwell, who had acted with much sagacity and steadfast patriotism during these strifes, was once more called into the field. With his wonted celerity and impetuosity he marched into Wales, quickly sup-

pressed the king's followers there, and then, moving rapidly northward, met a large army of Scots at Preston, and, after a hard fought battle, he broke, what he did not kill and capture, into a disorganized mob. He then marched into Scotland, where, by wise negotiations with the leaders of political opinion, he brought affairs to a peaceful conclusion.

On returning to London in December, 1648, Cromwell found Parliament making preparations for the trial of the unhappy king. Convinced of that monarch's insincerity and of his secret purpose to reign, not by law, but absolutely, that body, just purged unlawfully by Captain Pride's soldiers of such of its members as felt favorable to his restoration, resolved to put him on trial for treason. Oliver took no active part in urging them to this step. Indeed, he had, at one period, inclined to see Charles restored on condition of satisfactory guarantees from him; but the king's double-facedness, trickery, and proud self-assertion had finally satisfied him, not only that he could not be safely trusted, but that he ought to be dealt with by the people's representatives as a traitor who had levied war against the Parliament and the nation. Guided by this conviction he consented to sit as a commissioner in the court which tried the royal traitor.

He also signed his death-warrant. After the king's execution he gazed thoughtfully on the royal face, and remarked, "The king was a goodly man, and might have lived yet many years." He did not appear to regret his part in the tragedy. His thoughts most likely dwelt on its popular effects, for, to him, that dead face was a proclamation to the world that kings are responsible to their subjects, and as much deserving of death for tneir treason against public right as subjects are for their disloyalty to law.

Cromwell's next military service was in rebellious Ireland, whither he was sent as its lord lieutenant. On his arrival with nine thousand men he found Dublin and Derry the only places where the authority of Parliament was acknowledged. Everywhere else was fierce rebellion. Eighteen days after landing he stood with his army before Drogheda, demanding the surrender of its garrison, promising mercy to all who submitted, and threatening death to all who bore arms if they compelled him to take it with the sword. Resistance being offered, he opened fire upon its fortress, and, after a breach was made, led his Ironsides to the assault with such resistless impetuosity that the place was taken, and most of its defenders killed.

It was a terrible lesson, administered too much, perhaps, in a spirit of revenge for a fearful massacre of helpless Protestants a few years before at the instigation of the papal bishops. The completeness of the slaughter at Drogheda is a stain on Cromwell's memory. We do not defend it. Nevertheless, it is a historical fact that its severity led to the speedy overthrow of the rebellion, with less loss of life than would have been suffered if he had made war in milder fashion. Cromwell shed blood, not because he loved to see it flow, but because he was persuaded that he was doing it in defense of principles and laws which, when once established, would promote the liberties of men and the triumph of the kingdom of God. And it must be confessed that, in his final settlement of affairs in Ireland, he was governed by a purpose to do justice to all parties. His fighting made his name terrible to its inhabitants, but his rule gave them a greater degree of prosperity than they had ever previously enjoyed. To govern that people well, who seem incapable of self-government, is a problem as difficult of solution to-day as it was in the days of Cromwell.

Nine months of energetic fighting served to quiet Ireland. Cromwell returned to England in

May, 1650, not to repose on his laurels, but to prepare for another conflict with the Scots. The son and heir of the decapitated king had insincerely signed the Presbyterian Covenant, and Scotland had drawn the sword in his behalf. Cromwell, now raised to the chief command of the armies of the Commonwealth, promptly organized an army, marched rapidly to Edinburgh, and, after being brought into great straits by the sickness of his troops and the Fabian policy of Leslie, the Scottish general, finally won a decisive victory at Dunbar.

His next step was to try, by moral suasion, to bring the Presbyterian leaders into sympathy with the Commonwealth. In the midst of these friendly movements he was smitten with dangerous illness, caused by the hardships of war. On his recovery in June, 1651, a Scottish army being still in the field, he led his Ironsides against its entrenched camp near Stirling. Finding it too strongly posted to be dislodged, he maneuvered so as to cut it off from its sources of supply. Then Prince Charles took the daring step of suddenly breaking camp and marching into England, expecting, no doubt, to be supported by those who remained loyal to the House of Stuart. Cromwell followed close at his heels. The English militia swelled his forces as he marched

until, overtaking the Scots at Worcester, he gave them battle. The fight was fierce, but brief. Victory again crowned his invincible regiments. "The Scotch army was shivered into ruin, and the last hope of royalism buried." Cromwell, as if surprised at the completeness of its destruction, wrote to London, saying, "The dimensions of this mercy are above my thoughts. It is, for aught I know, a crowning mercy." Nine days later, September 12, 1651, this successful soldier entered London to be enthusiastically greeted by people of all classes. The modest farmer of St. Ives had become, by dint of superior merit, the greatest soldier of the age, the most popular man in the Commonwealth of England.

Cromwell's military career was now ended, but he had yet steeper and more perilous heights to climb. Parliament, or what Pride's purge had left of it, either through lack of brain or genuine patriotism, was incapable of giving form to a new government. The nation, disgusted with its proceedings, was much disturbed, and was looking to Cromwell and his officers for relief. Through nineteen months succeeding the battle of Worcester Cromwell had urged it to provide for the calling of a new House. Driven, at last, to take this step,

it met to adopt an Act which provided that all the members of the existing House should be, of right, members of the one to be chosen. Cromwell, anticipating their purpose, was present not only to protest, but to act. Finding them determined to adopt this unjust measure, he called in a company of soldiers whom he had previously stationed outside the door, cleared the hall, locked its door, and marched away with the key in his pocket. By this act he became master of England, since the army, being passionately devoted to his person, stood ready to perform whatever he might command. For what he had done no defense can be made on legal grounds. Nevertheless, all the circumstances considered, it was better for England to have him for its master than to drift, as it must have otherwise done, into another civil war.

The people shed no tears over this rude dismissal of what they had facetiously named the "Rump Parliament." They quietly acquiesced when Cromwell summoned one hundred and forty persons of note to constitute what is known in history as the "Little Parliament." And when, after five months of abortive effort to "accomplish a national reformation," they resigned, and his military council sent forth proclamation that "Oliver Cromwell had

been invested with the office of supreme governor of the British Commonwealth, under the title of LORD PROTECTOR," there was no open expression of popular discontent. And, on the 16th of December, 1653, he was installed in that high office with simple and solemn ceremony, in Westminster Hall.

It is impossible, within the narrow limits permitted to this sketch, to trace, even in bold outline, the proceedings of this great man during the five years of life which yet remained to him. Though not king in name, he wielded more than kingly power. Desirous of giving something like constitutional form to his government he summoned another Parliament, which met in September, 1654. Finding it more disposed to question the authority which gave it existence than to legislate wisely for the country, the resolute Protector dissolved it, and governed for two succeeding years, aided only by a council of major-generals. In 1656 he issued writs for the election of still another Parliament, which prepared a constitution for the government of the country, offered Cromwell the title of king, which he refused, and finally became so divided over the simple question of a name for an upper House that, in February, 1658, Oliver unexpectedly appeared among them, and said: "I think it high time to put

an end to your sitting, and I do dissolve this Parliament, and let God judge between you and me!"

Henceforth this mighty man, finding a representative Parliament impracticable, governed England according to his own conceptions of its needs. This was despotism, but not tyranny, since the end he sought was not power for its own sake, but for the public good. He ruled with an energy which promptly suppressed many royalist conspiracies against his life and in favor of the restoration of the Stuart dynasty. He maintained the public peace, secured rights of conscience for men of all faiths, encouraged trade and commerce, conducted diplomatic affairs with dignity and wisdom, and so brilliant were the victories of his navy over the Dutch and Spanish fleets, that the name of England was more feared and respected by the other great nations of Europe than at any former period of her history. England owes the beginning of her long maintained supremacy on the sea to Cromwell's government.

But not even his stout frame could long carry the intolerable burden of so many public cares as demanded his attention. The mental strain was too great for his physical strength. He shewed signs of weakness, became, at times, depressed in spirit,

morbid feelings disturbed him, and when he was stricken with tertian ague, his strength rapidly declined. After two weeks of suffering, during which his faith in God made him superior to the pains of death, he cried, "Truly God is good. My work is done, but God will take care of his people." And shortly after, at sunrise, on the 3d of September, 1658, the anniversary of his great victories at Dunbar and Worcester, he became speechless. At four o'clock in the afternoon of that memorable day he ceased to breathe. His kingly soul ascended to the presence of the King of kings, to hear heaven's judgment of his private acts and public deeds.

About the greatness of Oliver Cromwell there can be no dispute. Measured by his deeds, he stands in English history the peer of her greatest sons, if, indeed, he does not outrank them all. Concerning his character, however, opinions are as opposite as the poles. After his death, and the seizure of the crown by Charles II, royalist pamphleteers and historians portrayed him as the incarnation of baseness and hypocrisy. This was as foolish as it was false, since time is sure, sooner or later, to destroy the false and bring the truth to light. Cromwell himself said, that in the future the world would do justice to his memory. Our

age has justified his confidence. Macaulay and Carlyle have vindicated his memory, and proved that he was not a hypocritical, ambitious, unscrupulous usurper, but a sincere, earnest, large-minded, religious man, whose career was determined, not by subtle craft or hidden purpose to acquire illegitimate power, but by circumstances which, in their beginnings, he neither created nor controlled. So far as his religious life was known, it had its origin in a genuine conversion, and it subsequently entered into all his actions in peace, in war, in private, and in public. He was remarkably free from covetousness, vanity, and pride. He was a man of prayer, constantly seeking help from the God of battles in war, and wisdom from the Holy Spirit in his official duties. Perhaps his extreme confidence in immediate divine guidance may, at times, have led him to the brink of an unscriptural fanaticism; but his clear common sense kept him from falling over. Doubtless, he had faults, great faults. His temper was imperious; on occasions it was, perhaps, stern and terrible. He made war in the fierce spirit of the Old Testament rather than in the mildness of Christian charity; yet his sword was never drawn for selfish, but only for great national, ends. It cut to pieces that "divinity," with which

public superstition had previously "hedged about" a king, so completely that no subsequent English king has ever dared to set up star chambers, levy ship-money or other taxes without authority of Parliamentary law. By it he secured peace and prosperity for the people, and, had he lived a few years longer, would, in all probability, have found means to bring his government into harmony with laws constitutionally enacted.

VIII.

THOMAS CRANMER,

The Martyred Reformer.

"A religious spirit is a noble and imperial bird, that sometimes driven down by storm, yet keeps its plumes expanded and its eye on heaven, till, on the first gleam of sunshine it shakes its wet and weary wing, and eagle like towers again to the sun."

—Isaac Taylor.

THOMAS CRANMER, archbishop of Canterbury, was born in the village of Aslacton, Nottingham County, England, on the 2d of July, 1489. His father was a gentleman, descended from an ancient family, and the possessor of considerable property, though very little is known of his life and character.

The boyhood of Thomas Cranmer is mostly shrouded in mist. It is known that, for a teacher, he had a "rude parish clerk," whose vulgar manners and churlish temper were fitted, not to attract, but to repel, his pupils, and incline them to hate rather than to love learning. The boy's life at

home was apparently pleasant, since, in companionship with the sons of neighboring gentlemen, he was taught to fish, to shoot, to hunt, and to acquire such mastery of a horse that, when at the height of his subsequent greatness, he fearlessly mounted the most spirited and unruly horses in his stables.

Though we know nothing of his early school methods, yet it is tolerably certain that he used them with more than ordinary diligence and profit, because, when only fourteen years old, he was found competent to enter Jesus College, Cambridge. It was his misfortune, at that tender age, to lose his father; and his mother, intending to educate him for the Church, placed him in that university. Of his undergraduate life while there we have no knowledge. It must, however, have been alike creditable to his reputation and stimulating to his intellect, since, after taking his degree, he continued in his college, and supplemented the studies of his course with a broader range of topics. Breaking away from the dialectics of the schoolmen, he caught the literary spirit, and followed the example of the learned Erasmus, who was, at that time, resident in the university, and devoted himself to the study of the Hebrew and Greek languages, and of ancient and classic literature.

Thus his culture was more liberal than that of most scholars of his time. He was also assiduous in digesting and storing up his knowledge. He always read with a pen in his hand, transcribing, making notes, and recording references in his commonplace books for subsequent use. The result of this diligence on his active, independent mind was such high attainments in learning that, in 1510, when only twenty-one years old, he was elected to a fellowship.

He retained his fellowship little more than a year. A young lady of good birth, but in humble circumstances, won his affections, and he married her. As college fellows were required to be unmarried, this act, probably imprudent in his circumstances, cost him his office. His wife being related to the hostess of the Dolphin Tavern, he took lodgings in that inn, a fact that led his popish enemies slanderously to represent him as having filled the humble position of hostler. But the authorities of his university, unwilling to lose his valuable services, appointed him lecturer in Magdalen College, where, in allusion to the above slander, Fuller quaintly observed, that "with his learned lectures he curried the lazy hide of many an idle and ignorant friar." His wife dying about a year after

marriage, he was restored to his fellowship, and appointed public examiner in theology.

It was while engaged in giving theological lectures and examining candidates for the ministry, that his views of the supremacy and importance of the Scriptures were matured. Though his reading was very extensive, yet, for a considerable time, he was literally a man of one book—the Bible—which he read with persistent diligence in its original languages, comparing Scripture with Scripture, and testing all theological opinions by its statements. This devotion to the Word, with his rigid rejection of every clerical candidate who was unfamiliar with it, made him very obnoxious to the lazy monks and friars; but it proved a blessing to many, and helped forward the Reformation, then struggling into life in England. It also won him the name of *Scripturist.* Better still was its influence over his own heart, which gently and gradually opened to the spiritual claims of his divine Lord.

A seemingly trivial incident now changed the current of Cranmer's career. An infectious disease broke out in Cambridge. To escape this epidemic he took two pupils who were under his care to their home at Waltham Abbey, Essex. Their mother being his niece, he was invited by her and her hus-

band, Mr. Cressy, to remain at the abbey and continue the instruction of their sons. While he was residing there, Henry VIII spent a night in the neighborhood. Two of his attendants, Gardiner, his secretary, and Fox, his almoner, were lodged at Mr. Cressy's mansion. Meeting Cranmer at the supper-table, their conversation naturally turned on what was the great question of the day in court and clerical circles—the proposed divorce of the king from his wife, Catherine of Arragon. This lady was the widow of the king's brother when, twenty years before, he married her by authority of a papal dispensation. Recently the king, pretending to feel stricken in conscience, because marriage with a brother's widow was held by many to be unscriptural, was seeking to obtain the consent of the pope to his divorce. That dignitary, after many exasperating delays, had summoned the king and queen to Rome, either in person or by proxies, to abide his decision. The king was indignant. Right or wrong, he was bent on being divorced; but was desirous, nevertheless, of gaining his end by such means as would give it the appearance, at least, of being a righteous act. Not that he cared for its righteousness, but Catherine's character and royal connections compelled him to show some signs

of respect for public opinion both at home and abroad.

Cranmer, discussing this subject with Gardiner and Fox, remarked, in substance: "The real question is, not what the Church says, but what says the Word of God. If God has declared a marriage of this nature bad, the pope can not make it good. Cease going to Rome. Consult the universities!"

Fox reported these remarks to the king. Henry, in his bluff, not to say vulgar, manner, said: "Where is this Dr. Cranmer? I perceive he hath the right sow by the ear." Cranmer was, therefore, soon moved from his tutor's chair to Henry's stately court. With deep reluctance, after some intentional delay, he stood timidly in the presence of his haughty, imperious sovereign. The king spoke graciously and, after referring to the opinion he had expressed at Waltham Abbey, added, "I see that you have found the breach through which we must storm the fortress." He then commanded Cranmer to devote himself wholly to the study of the questions involved, and to prepare a paper that "should bring comfort" both to his conscience and the queen's. The gentle Cranmer begged to be excused. Henry was peremptory, and sent him forthwith to the earl of Wiltshire's mansion to compose, in quiet,

the desired report. The earl was the father of Anne Boleyn, the lady destined by the king to fill the place of the unfortunate Catherine.

Cranmer's unaffected modesty, transparent sincerity, and unambitious temper made a deep impression on the mind of the arrogant king. He saw in him a man unlike the selfish flatterers who stood around his throne, in that he could be implicitly trusted. Hence he conceived a friendship for him, which proved to be enduring as his own life. Among the first fruits of this friendship was Cranmer's commission as member of an embassy, which was to be sent to the pope at Rome, to induce him to decide in favor of the long-desired dispensation for the divorce of the queen. Pope Clement was courteous. He shrank from a contest with such a powerful monarch, but he was still more afraid of the emperor of Germany, to whom Catherine was related, to gratify the English king. But, notwithstanding Cranmer's failure to gain the pope, the king was sufficiently pleased with his efforts to appoint him, in 1531, ambassador to the German emperor. His presence in Germany, though it accomplished nothing with the emperor, was, nevertheless, beneficial to the Reformation, in that Cranmer's intimacy with the German Reformers

tended to make him a pronounced Protestant. His acquaintance with the learned Osiander, pastor of Nuremberg, led to his marriage with that great man's niece. Being a clergyman whom the king had appointed his chaplain, made archdeacon of Taunton, and the incumbent of a parochial benefice, Cranmer was bound by papal law to perpetual celibacy. By this marriage, therefore, he practically abjured that law, and committed himself to one of the most radical principles of the Reformation—the liberty of the ministry to marry.

In 1532 a missive from Henry summoned Cranmer back to England. The archbishop of Canterbury was dead. The king was resolved to raise Cranmer to that see. To be primate of the English Church was an honor which this unambitious man had never imagined within his reach. He shrunk from its unexpected offer, conscious, no doubt, that he was constitutionally unfitted for such a difficult position. The learned quiet of a country parish would have suited him far better. He objected, begged to be excused, delayed his answer, and raised a question of conscience respecting the oath of obedience to the pope, prescribed by law at the investment of the primacy. But Henry was imperious. Persistent refusal would be regarded as

contumacy, both by the king and public opinion. Therefore, Cranmer finally yielded, satisfying his conscience on the question of the oath by the questionable expedient of a written protest, in which he repudiated the legal right of the pope to exercise ecclesiastical authority within the realm of England. This protest made taking the oath an act of mockery. It openly asserted a purpose to perform things which he was avowedly determined to oppose, because he deemed them unlawful. No Christian moralist can, therefore, consistently defend this act of Cranmer, though a casuist may plausibly excuse it. True, his refusal to take the oath might have cost him dear, for Henry was a hard, unscrupulous monarch, quite as ready to take the liberties or lives of those who opposed his royal will as he was to heap favors on those who obeyed his commands. Cranmer, no doubt, thought he was doing right. Yet one can not help regretting that he did not see it his duty heroically to accept the perils of an honest refusal to take the oath.

But the oath was taken, and when forty years of age, Dr. Cranmer was archbishop of Canterbury, an office next in dignity to majesty itself. Knowing that the king's first object in elevating him to that high post was to secure through him his cov-

eted divorce, he proceeded forthwith to cite the unhappy queen to appear before his court. She proudly refused to attend, was consequently declared contumacious, and her marriage adjudged to be null and void, because contracted in defiance of the divine prohibition in the Levitical law. This act was no sooner made public than Henry, who had previously been secretly married to Anne Boleyn, had the marriage ceremony repeated in public. Cranmer, as primate, judicially confirmed their union. To complete this scandalous marriage, Anne was immediately crowned queen of England with all the pomp and splendor proper to such grand occasions. The only excuse an admirer of Cranmer can offer for his part in this disgusting transaction is his firm belief that marriage between a man and the widow of his deceased brother is unlawful. In this he was mistaken; yet he believed it, and consequently, in his view, Catherine's marriage to Henry had been null from the beginning. On the other hand, he knew that it was not the king's conscience, but his passion for the beautiful Anne Boleyn, that moved his majesty to divorce her whom for twenty years he had recognized as his lawful wife. It will seem, therefore, that, as a pure-minded man, Cranmer ought to have refused

to become the instrument of helping the unscrupulous king to attain his unhallowed end.

The king's marriage called forth a threat of his excommunication from the incensed pope. But to that royal sinner a threat was a stimulant, not to his fears, but to his wrath. His reply to it was a series of Parliamentary proceedings, which culminated in the transference to the king of the powers heretofore possessed by the pope over the English Church. This legislation was the logical outcome of the broad principle avowed by Cranmer in his first interview with Henry. But neither the king nor Cranmer at first comprehended all that it contained. The monarch's interest in it was limited to its bearing on his divorce. Cranmer's perception of its scope was much clearer. Yet even he did not then perceive that it held within itself, not merely the denial of the pope's ecclesiastical supremacy, but also, at least germinally, the fundamental doctrines which gave spiritual life and value to the Reformation. It soon became evident, however, that the archbishop's mind was growing into more Scriptural views of doctrine. When the Vatican excommunicated Henry, and the Parliament made him the secular head of the English Church, there was, very naturally, a widespread

sympathy with the pope among the English Catholic clergy. Then Cranmer felt bound to preach in his cathedral on the points involved; and in his sermons he clearly expressed the fundamental theological dogma of the Reformation. "Our sins," he observed, "are remitted by the death of our Savior Jesus Christ. It is, therefore, a manifest injury to Christ to impute the remission of sins to any laws of man's making. . . . No human enactments can confer the character of holiness on the observer of them." This was a bold statement to meet the eye of his bluff master who, with regard to dogma, was still a papist, and remained so to his dying day; and who did not scruple to behead Sir Thomas More and Fisher, bishop of Rochester, for refusing to acquiesce in the preamble of the "Act of Succession," passed by Parliament. Happily for Cranmer's reputation, he did his utmost, in a letter to Secretary Cromwell, to dissuade the king from those monstrous executions.

Cranmer was no self-indulgent ecclesiastic, but a hard working superintendent of his provinces, which he soon visited, promoting the doctrine of the royal supremacy, inspecting the conduct of the bishops, and other Church dignitaries, and correcting superstitious practices. He also began to take measures

for giving the people Tyndall's translation of the Holy Scriptures; and, when Secretary Cromwell dissolved the monasteries as nests of corruption, he approved, albeit he vainly, perhaps unadvisedly, tried to preserve a few of those ancient structures as homes for contemplative, benevolent persons. In these measures, so favorable to the development of the Reformation, he was bitterly opposed by Bishops Gardiner and Stokesly. Nevertheless, the good work advanced. God was working in the spirit of the age. The great body of the clergy acquiesced in the new order of things, as did most of the laity; and when, in 1538, Pope Pius III issued an extravagant bull against the king, in which, among other foolish things, he called upon English Romanists of all classes to rebel against their sovereign, and to reduce their opponents to slavery, many who looked on doubtingly became fast friends of a reformatory movement which was so cautiously, yet firmly, guided by the hand of Cranmer.

Early in May, 1536, Cranmer was officially commanded to repair to his palace and not to appear at court. The occasion of this imperial order was his known respect for the character of Queen Anne, who was about to be tried for alleged offenses,

deemed worthy of death. To him Anne Boleyn, though a vivacious and imprudent lady, was a protectress of the Reformation, a benefactress to the poor, a patroness of learned men. But the fickle king had conceived a passion for the lovely Jane Seymour. Hence Anne, of whose charms he had become tired, was doomed to divorce and death. Her envious enemies, eager to please the king and ruin her, stood ready to swear that she had committed most unqueenly and unwomanly crimes. Cranmer believed her innocent, and when all other dignitaries of the court forsook her, he wrote a most able, judicious, and dignified letter in her behalf to the king. This was a manly act. It put both his office and person in peril. But it availed nothing. Guilty or innocent—but which it is now impossible to decide—the queen, after a star chamber trial, was condemned. Cranmer was then commanded to meet her and the king in Lambeth palace, and to pronounce their marriage a nullity. Either he must obey this stultifying mandate or abdicate his high office. He obeyed, but with much torture of mind. Anne was publicly beheaded, and the day succeeding her death the brutal monarch outraged the sensibilities of both friends and foes by making Jane Seymour his bride! Alas! that Cranmer

should have described this crowned monster as "a most godly prince of famous memory."

Was Cranmer subservient to his tyrannical master because he was afraid of him? It can not be doubted that the fear natural to a nervous temperament, and an excessive sensibility which made him shrink from disobliging his friends, had much to do with his pliability. This weakness in one so intellectually great, though by no means justified, is yet palliated by the fact that the prcudest dignitaries in England were also afraid of their despotic king. "The lion hath roared, who will not fear?" asks Fuller, when speaking of the submission of court, council, convocation, and Parliament to the dictation of this haughty tyrant. But if Cranmer bent his knees in unseemly fashion at times, he partly atoned for his cowardice by using his extraordinary personal influence with the king, not for his own advantage, but in persuading him to consent to many measures adapted to promote the Reformation. A convocation, for example, having, under his firm guidance, adopted a series of articles which, though not entirely anti-papal, yet contained the most vital doctrines of Protestantism, the archbishop, through Secretary Cromwell, secured for them the royal sanction, together with certain injunc-

tions favorable to the spread of evangelical truth. Among the latter was one requiring that a Bible in Latin and English should be placed in the choir of every church for the free use of the people. It was his influence which also secured the writing and publication, under royal sanction of a treatise called the "Bishops' Book," which taught that truth is to be determined according to the true meaning of Scripture without reference to any other authority. Of still more vital consequence was Cranmer's patronage of "Matthew's Bible," a translation made partly by Tyndall and partly by Coverdale. This he accepted in place of a revised translation already begun by himself and the bishops. Through his friend and coadjutor, Cromwell, he sent a copy of this Bible to the king, and obtained his permission for its sale and circulation. Then this book, so long forbidden, was eagerly sought and diligently read by vast numbers. Thus, it appears, that while the king used the archbishop for his evil ends, the archbishop used the king as his instrument to help forward the Reformation.

Yet Cranmer's influence was not absolute, but limited to questions which did not resist the passions of the king. Hence, when the great abbeys of the realm were dissolved, and their confiscated wealth

placed at his disposal, instead of applying it to religious and educational objects, he spent it in self-indulgencies and prodigal gifts to his favorites, often to men of low birth, who knew how to flatter his vanity. Against these things Cranmer, with his friend Latimer, firmly protested. "But his words," says Le Bas, "were as the murmurs of them that dream" in his sacrilegious ears.

As already stated, Cranmer was married, as were also other reformed clergymen. His wife lived with him at Lambeth, but only in a private manner. He was, therefore, desirous, both as a Reformer and a husband, to secure the legal recognition of clerical marriages. To this end he petitioned the king, not to condemn such marriages, but to submit the question of their Scriptural validity to the universities for debate and decision. In doing this he struck the superstitious dread which controlled the royal mind. Henry took pleasure in schismatically defying the pope's claim to supremacy, but he shrunk from the odium of being regarded a heretic. Knowing this, the Romish party in the Church, led most zealously by bishops Gardiner, Tonstal, and Stokesley, had sought to acquire an influence over his mind. They now exerted their full power, since they knew clerical celibacy to be the stronghold of

Romanism. Cranmer was alarmed at their success when Henry, in response to his petition, put forth a proclamation condemning clerical marriages, depriving such as lived *openly* with their wives of their ecclesiastical offices, and threatening with fine and imprisonment all ministers who should enter the married state in future. Evidently the Reformation was in jeopardy.

The Romanists were men of intrigue. They made sinister use of Cranmer's persistent and really courageous hostility to the king's shameful misuse of the wealth of the suppressed abbeys to prejudice his mind against the archbishop, whose simplicity of character unfitted him to cope with such unscrupulous men. Those scheming enemies of the truth also undermined the influence of Secretary Cromwell over the fickle Henry. And when the Parliament of 1539, in obedience to the royal wish, passed an Act approving six fundamental articles of papistical belief with severe penalties for opposing them either in practice or by disputation, it seemed as if a reaction had set in which was likely to stop the further progress of the Reformation. Cranmer, in defiance of a positive order from the king, forbidding his attendance, was present in the House of Lords when this infamous Act was adopted. He was silent, how-

ever, probably because he saw that the current was too strong to be stemmed by arguments from his lips. Perhaps he ought, in consistency, to have resigned his office, as Latimer and Shaxton did their bishoprics. That he did not is attributed partly to his belief in transubstantiation, and partly to his *Erastian* views concerning the right of the state to control the Church. He was, no doubt, deeply dejected, as were all the reformers. He conformed to the Act by sending his wife to her native land, but proceeded to give his most earnest attention to the question of how far the state was authorized to inflict punishment for heresy. But the exultation of his enemies was much cooled by assurances from the king, openly given, that his personal regard for Cranmer was not at all impaired.

By this time Jane Seymour, Henry's third wife, had been dead two years. Cromwell selected Anne of Cleves, the daughter of a Protestant prince, for his fourth wife. The king married her, but conceived such dislike to her that, six months later, he required his Parliament and the convocation to pass bills of divorce. Cranmer presided in the latter body, and for reasons now unknown, which he affirmed to be just, approved that disgraceful deed. The misused Anne returned to Germany,

and the heartless king shortly after took Catherine Howard to be his fifth wife.

Henry, displeased with Secretary Cromwell for bringing about his marriage with the homely Anne of Cleves, and, instigated by the Romish party, secured his impeachment and execution as a traitor. Cranmer was deeply grieved. He ventured to plead, though vainly, for the unhappy statesman, in terms that no other man in England would have dared to address to the imperious monarch. And when Cromwell's head fell on the blood-stained scaffold, the archbishop's papist foes rejoiced in their belief that he would be the next victim of the king's caprice. They were mistaken. They had not taken the measure of their monarch's friendship for Cranmer. They were more than startled when, after securing from a royal commission the approval of an Act which, had it been passed by Parliament, would have re-established almost every dogma and practice in popery except the supremacy of the pope, they saw their carefully prepared Act laid before Parliament, so modified by the king, through Cranmer's persuasion, as to be in harmony with the opinions of the man whom they were seeking to destroy—thus they were "hoist on their own petard."

Still another victory for the truth was a royal proclamation requiring copies of a new edition of Holy Scripture, which became known as Cranmer's Bible, because it contained a noble preface from his able pen, to be placed in all the churches which were still unsupplied with the Word of God notwithstanding previous injunctions.

"These evidences of Cranmer's power with his uncertain master convinced the Romanizing party," says Foxe, that "there could neither counselor, bishop, nor papist win him out of the king's favor." This conviction was strengthened when the archbishop, being told of certain facts criminating the queen, dared to lay them before the astonished monarch. Instead of sending him to the Tower, as he was most likely to do, his respect for his informant moved him to institute an inquiry, which resulted in the execution of the queen, who, by her own confession, was guilty of profligacy before, if not after, her marriage with Henry.

Though disheartened, Cranmer's papal foes were not inclined to give up their efforts to strike him down. The crafty Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, contrived, by flattering Henry's vanity, to insinuate himself into the king's confidence. He succeeded in persuading his majesty, who, in *doctrine*, was still

a Catholic, to issue a formulary filled with papistical teachings, to which all were enjoined implicitly to submit or suffer the penalties of heresy. This encouraged the bishop to proceed still further, and to aim at the heads of Cranmer and Catherine Parr, the king's sixth wife, and a friend of the Reformation. His first shaft was directed at the archbishop. But Henry was not easily hoodwinked. He soon perceived that Gardiner's activity against the Reformers around the court was chiefly intended to destroy Cranmer, and his remarkable friendship for his chaplain was roused into wakefulness. Concealing his feelings, he took the papers prepared by the bishop's agents at the king's request, charging Cranmer with certain pretended violations of the king's proclamations and injunctions. He then went in his barge to the palace of the accused prelate. Cranmer met his majesty on the steps by the waterside. Calling him into the barge his majesty exclaimed: "O, my chaplain, now I know who is the greatest heretic in Kent!"

He then gave the accusing papers to the wondering prelate who, after reading them, and noting the names of many whom he had greatly befriended, kneeled with much agitation before Henry, and solicited him to appoint a commission to sift the

charges made against him. The bluff monarch replied: "A commission there shall be, but the archbishop of Canterbury shall be the chief commissioner, with such colleagues as he himself shall be pleased to appoint."

Thus Cranmer's enemies were again confounded and humbled before him. Yet he sought no revenge, but when they implored his pardon forgave them freely. Incapable of gratitude, these bad men some time after, led by the duke of Norfolk, once more complained to the king that the archbishop was filling the land with heretics. On the flimsy plea that men were afraid to testify against him so long as he was at liberty, they prayed that he might be sent to the Tower. Perceiving their design, Henry gave them leave to summon him before the council and, if they found occasion, to commit him to prison.

While these bloodthirsty men were rejoicing over the impending fate of their unsuspecting victim, Henry secretly sent for him, told him of their designs, bade him appear before the council, placed his signet ring on his finger, and said, "If they proceed to commit you to the Tower show them this ring."

Cranmer obeyed their summons. Sure of their

prey they insultingly kept him in waiting in the anteroom of their chamber among serving-men. When called into their presence they read the charges against him, and, after refusing him permission to reply, ordered his commitment. Then Cranmer showed them the royal signet. They were panic-struck, and, when forced to appear before their angry master, their ears were made to tingle by the severe reproaches he heaped upon them. Once more they begged the forbearing archbishop's pardon. As before, he generously forgave, and justified the common saying, "Do my lord of Canterbury an ill turn, and you make him your friend forever." O, noble-minded Cranmer!

From this time until Henry's death, in 1547, the Romish party, unable to destroy Cranmer, did all they could to hinder the work of reform to which he perseveringly devoted his great powers. And when the royal tyrant was dying he would confer "with no other than Cranmer." His last act, after becoming speechless, was to wring the archbishop's hand, which must be taken as a declaration that, in death as in life, he was his chaplain's friend.

Edward VI succeeded Henry VIII. He was only a child, nearly ten years old, and had reigned

with a Protector but six years, when death cut off the bright promise his sweet, pure character had given to the Reformation. During that brief period Cranmer's fidelity to Protestant ideas was conspicuous. His ecclesiastical statesmanship was also demonstrated in the legislation he proposed, the improvement of the Book of Common Prayer, the preparation of forty-two articles of faith, and the abolition of numerous papistical practices from public worship, for all which he was mainly responsible. His own opinions, especially on the holy sacrament, became more Scriptural. Every thing, but the activity and intrigue of the Romanizing party, favored the complete and final triumph of the Reformation. But when Edward died, and Mary succeeded to the throne, all was reversed. Cranmer's power was broken. The reluctant support he gave to the foolish claim to the crown set up for Lady Jane Grey by Northumberland, her ambitious father-in-law, made him a traitor in the eye of the law. In his opinions and practices he was a heretic. Mary, a bigoted papist, a heartless woman, guided by the bloodthirsty Gardiner, was his enemy. Hence he was speedily arrested, condemned for treason, degraded, unfrocked, found guilty of heresy, and sentenced to death by burning.

The brutality of his implacable enemies moved them to treat him cruelly at first and then to flatter him with hopes of pardon provided he would recant his errors. Firm when threatened, he became pliable when flattered, and made a shameful recantation; but was, nevertheless, led to the stake, where he displayed such regret for his recantations, and endured the pangs of burning so heroically that, though one can not help regretting his guilty pliability, yet one can not refuse to love and admire him for the noble testimony to the truth, which he gave amid the crackling of the burning fagots and the tortures of the fire which consumed his quivering flesh.

Cranmer's admirers can not justly claim that his character was blameless. His natural timidity begat a moral weakness that made him altogether too flexible, too submissive to the unrighteous demands of his intolerant master. Had he possessed Luther's impetuous courage he would have refused obedience to King Henry's impious requirements. Yet, it must be confessed, that his refusal would, in all probability, have doomed him to comparative obscurity or to the scaffold, thereby preventing him from rendering those great services to the Reformation which nursed it through its stormy infancy into

a life so vigorous that the terrible persecutions of Mary's reign could not destroy it. It is unquestionable that English Protestantism owes more to Cranmer than to any other individual. But for him one scarcely sees how it could have reached any higher point in that age than a repudiation of the pope's ecclesiastical supremacy. This is no justification of his weakness, but it suggests that divine Providence, while giving effect to the many strong points in his character, made even his weakness an instrument for doing great service to truth and the Church.

But though constitutionally timid and ductile, Cranmer could, when occasion called, display a lofty, almost sublime courage. It required no ordinary degree of bravery to maintain, as he did for many years, an immovable purpose to reform the Church of England by measures to which he knew that his sovereign must be hostile. He did this, clearly conscious that he was playing a game of life or death. Yet he bravely persisted. True, as noted above, when the fire of martyrdom blazed beneath its crown, his timid sensitiveness shrunk instinctively from the pangs of such a death, and moved him to those shameful recantations which cloud his illustrious name. But when his eye of faith looked

above the fire to the crown, his higher nature asserted itself, and he died a heroic, sublime death.

The redeeming feature in Cranmer was his unselfishness. If he was pliable, it was not for himself, but for his cause. It can scarcely be doubted that the shrewd Henry quickly discovered this unselfishness, and that, seeing it, as he had seen it in no other man, he was moved to that exceptional personal friendship for Cranmer which proved his impregnable bulwark against his many vindictive and powerful enemies. It was because of his faith in the archbishop's disinterestedness, and not alone for his services in divorcing his wives, that Henry permitted him to promote those *doctrines* of the Reformation to which his blinded mind and dissolute nature were incurably hostile.

Kindness, generosity, gentleness, benevolence, truthfulness, gratitude, fidelity, piety, and a disposition to forgive an injury, however base, gave rare beauty to Cranmer's character at a time when such virtues were exceedingly rare, especially in court and ecclesiastical circles. That a man adorned with such lovely and Christ-like graces should have assented, as he undoubtedly did, to the execution of even a few men and women for maintaining heretical opinions was an anomaly in his gentle

nature, which must be charged less to him than to the cruel theories of the papal Church burned into the public mind by the martyr fires of many ages. Like the irrational dogma of transubstantiation, the idea that heresy is a crime deserving death was viewed as a truth not to be questioned for years after his mind had accepted the principal doctrines of the Reformation. How difficult it is to break the shackles of false education!

Cranmer was a writer and scholar, learned in ancient and modern languages, in theology, in canon law. The proofs of his greatness and his claim to a high place among the world's leading minds are to be found in what he accomplished toward the redemption of the Church of England from the bondage of papal error and superstition. The germs of the best things in that Church to-day may be found in the writings and acts of Thomas Cranmer.

IX.

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS.

The Pusillanimous Scholar.

"The soul is by vile fear assailed, which oft
So overtakes a man, that he recoils
From noblest resolution, like a beast
At some false semblance in the twilight gloom."

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS was born at Rotterdam, Holland, October 27th, in or about the year 1467. His real name was Gerard, which signifies "the Beloved," but which, according to a fashion of his times, he changed into its Greek equivalent, Erasmus. His given name, Desiderius, he took from the mediæval Latin. His father belonged to a respectable family, the Gerards of Tergou. His mother, named Margaret, was the daughter of a physician of Zevenbergen, in Brabant. He had an only brother named Peter, with whom he spent the years of his early childhood under the roof of his maternal grandmother at

Tergou. Of his life in that house nothing is known beyond the fact that he was sent to school when four years of age. Tradition said that he was a slow, dull scholar at first, but it is strongly suspected that tradition erred from the truth in ascribing stolidity to the child who, in his youth and manhood, took to learning as fishes do to water and birds to air.

The boy's voice must have been uncommonly musical, since we find him, while yet a child, enrolled among the choristers in the cathedral church at Utrecht. When nine years old he became a pupil in a school then somewhat celebrated, in the thriving town of Deventer, where his affectionate mother had fixed her residence. This school belonged to a religious fraternity called the "Brothers of the Common Life." Unlike most of the monkish orders of the period these brothers lived strict lives, and labored with zeal to promote a love of letters. Under their direction Erasmus was taught the bad Latin of the Middle Ages, with as much of Greek as could be taught without lexicon or grammar, by Alexander Hegius, who, said his illustrious pupil in later years, was "not altogether ignorant of it."

His remarkable diligence and uncommon memory

made him a marked boy. "You will one day be a great man," said the learned Agricola, to whom his teacher had shown one of his exercises in composition. Another of his teachers, delighted with his school work, kissed him one day, and said with enthusiastic affection, "Go on, Erasmus; hereafter you will reach the highest pinnacle of learning." The fact that, before he was thirteen years old, he had the whole of Terence and Horace "at his fingers' ends," if not entirely committed to memory, as some have said, seemed to justify these high expectations of his future. In after years he did not give his school at Deventer very high credit. "The studies," he said, "were barbarous. Heavens! what an age that was when, with a mighty show of learning, the stanzas of John à Garland used to be dunned into young men, accompanied by tiresome and laborious criticisms; when a great part of our time was wasted in composing, repeating, or learning the silliest verses!" This depreciation of his school, it is likely, was scarcely just, since, at thirteen, he was prepared to enter a university.

Hitherto the boy's life, if not wholly free from hardships, had been passed without unusual trials; but now, that he stood on the threshold of youth, it became like a troubled stream. The plague vis-

ited Deventer. Every inmate of the house in which he lived was smitten to death. His mother was one of its victims. He returned to Tergou. Then his father died. His relatives had plundered the house of the dying man. One of his three guardians died shortly after, the second neglected to look after his patrimony, and the third, who was a miserly hypocrite, instead of sending him and his brother to a university, determined, if possible, to persuade them to enter a monastery, that he might devote their property to his own selfish uses. To accomplish his infamous purpose he sent them to a school at Bolduc, in Brabant, which was little else than a nursery from which to replenish the monastic orders. Here Erasmus and his brother, who knew more than their ignorant teachers, instead of being instructed in the literature they loved, were compelled, by blows and threats, to perform manual labor, to recite dull prayers, and to listen to entreaties to enter some monastic order. To one of the kindest of those mistaken men, who added hugs and kisses to his entreaties, Erasmus replied with a wisdom beyond his years: "I know neither the kind of life you wish me to adopt, nor my own mind. When I am older I will consider the matter."

Through two tedious, wasted years our delicate,

blue-eyed, precocious lad endured the harsh discipline of this monastic school. Then the plague, which had robbed him of his mother, became his friend, in that it compelled his departure from Bolduc. Returning to Tergou he met his hypocritical guardian, who, with knavish coolness, informed him and his brother that their property was gone, that they must enter a monastery or starve. Finding abusive threats ineffectual, this bad man sought the aid of others, who tried to win the lad's consent by describing the charms, the ease, the enjoyments of monastic life, in contrast with the dangers of the world without. Erasmus held out against all these efforts until one of his old Deventer schoolmates, who had entered a convent, told him that he would find abundance of books and ample leisure for study in a monastery. This statement won him over, and he entered the Augustinian house of Stein. During the first year of his novitiate the monks permitted him to pursue his literary studies with little hindrance, hoping by such indulgence to overcome his undisguised dislike of convent life. At the end of the year it required all but force to induce him to put on the gown and hood of the order. He did so, however, hoping that some door of escape might open during the next year; but it did

not. Yet the more he saw of the lives of the monks the more he hated them and their convent. But his head was in their noose, and by dint of wrathful threats and ghostly denunciations they gradually wore away his firmness. When they saw him worn by illness, broken in spirit, and bowed beneath a sense of his utter friendlessness, they said: "Where will you go? You will never be able to come into the presence of good men; you will be execrated by monks and hated by the world."

This thought of the shame which might follow his refusal to take monastic vows filled the cup of his misery to overflowing, and the tortured young man gave way. The fatal words were pronounced, and, says Drummond, one of his biographers, "Erasmus became a monk."

Having, through necessity, accepted a mode of life which was hateful to him, our young student, unlike his less conscientious brother, wisely resolved to make the best possible use of such opportunities for self-improvement as it afforded. While his brother sought indulgence in the vices of the convent, and died through dissipation, Erasmus, despite the hostility of the lazy, drunken brotherhood to literature, gave his spare hours to the study of such Latin authors as were within his

reach. Aided by one congenial spirit, a monk named William Hermann, he read Ovid, Virgil, Juvenal, Livy, and Cicero, studied the works of Laurentius Valla, and other Italian authors, employed his pen in the composition of Latin poems and of essays in prose, some of which, finding their way into print, gained him the reputation, among a few, of being "the most accomplished man of his time in both verse and prose composition." The prior of his convent, convinced, at last, that he was unfitted by nature for a monastic life, recommended him to Henry à Bergis, bishop of Cambray, who was seeking for a "scholarly man to be his secretary and companion." This opportunity Erasmus gladly accepted, and, in 1491, when twenty-four years of age, quitted his convent cell with no other regret than for the loss of the companionship of his dear friend Hermann.

He is described as being at this period a young man with a delicate constitution, a small, well-built, elegant figure, grave in deportment, charming in his manners, with a pleasant, though timid, expression of countenance, blue eyes, light brown hair, fair complexion, pointed nose, and a large, flexible mouth. "His voice was weak, but his pronunciation was beautifully accurate." His principal

accomplishment was his knowledge of Latin, and his power to write it with rare elegance. Of Greek he knew very little. His only acquaintance with theology he had made by desultory reading in the convent library. Of the scholastic philosophy, thought in his day to be essential to a theologian, he as yet knew nothing. It is not surprising, therefore, that, with his passionate desire for learning, he now sought to enjoy a university training. Being absolutely penniless, he had no means of gaining this boon which, to him, was more than much gold, except through the pecuniary aid of the bishop, who had sought his services. This the bishop readily promised, but, owing to some change in his ecclesiastical hopes and plans, he no longer stood in need of his secretary's services, and did not fulfill his promise as to money. Then Erasmus, after spending a year or two at Cambray, was ordained a priest; and, being supplied with a small sum by his niggardly patron, became a student in the University of Paris, which was at that time one of the most renowned seats of learning in Europe.

The bishop of Cambray, whose promises continued more liberal than his gifts, kept Erasmus so poorly supplied with money that he was compelled to reside in the College of Montaigne, designed for

poor students. There the fare was so niggardly, the discipline so severe, the beds so hard and damp, that our eager student fell sick, and was compelled to return to his patron at Cambray to recruit. After some months he re-entered the university, resumed his studies with his wonted zeal, and supported himself by taking private pupils. Among the young men who profited by his instruction, and became his fast friend, was Lord Mountjoy, an English nobleman, who persuaded him to visit England, which he did, probably in 1498, after spending five or six Winters in Paris. He was then about thirty-one years of age.

His scholarly reputation had preceded him. His letters to Charnock, prior of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine and head of St. Mary's College, Oxford, procured him a residence in that college. His learning and rare conversational powers speedily gained him the friendship of the best minds and most liberal thinkers at Oxford. Among the latter was the amiable Thomas More. Concerning the first meeting of these two scholars it is said, at least with probability, that Erasmus, after listening awhile to his brilliant conversation, was so impressed by his wit that he exclaimed, "Either thou art More or no one." To which

More wittily replied, "Either thou art Erasmus or Satan." And this proved to be the beginning of a lifelong friendship between them. John Colet was another learned Oxonian with whom Erasmus formed a lasting and delightful friendship. That liberal and devout thinker tried to persuade Erasmus to accept a lectureship at Oxford. Happily for the as yet unborn Reformation, our scholar refused. Had he accepted it, notwithstanding the attention he was then giving to the study of the Greek, it is more than probable that at Oxford he would not have attained that mastery of the language which enabled him to produce his edition of the Greek Testament, to which the theology and spirit of the Reformation was subsequently so greatly indebted. Doubtless, therefore, the finger of Providence guided him when, after a year of profitable study and delightful literary associations at Oxford, he returned to the university at Paris.

The next six years of his life he spent in Paris, in Orleans, in the Netherlands, struggling with a poverty which compelled him to beg money from such rich patrons of literature as professed to admire his great talents. His devotion to study and his straitened circumstances are alike illustrated in his remark to a friend: "As soon as I get money

I shall buy first Greek books and then clothes." Yet he never suffered his pecuniary difficulties to chill his purpose to acquire mastery of the Greek language. Neither did it prevent him from using his pen, for at this period he produced several tracts and a hand-book of piety, of which a learned man said, somewhat jestingly, perhaps, yet not wholly without truth, "There is more religion in the book than in the author." Nevertheless, the work was highly esteemed by the public, and contributed largely to his constantly growing literary reputation.

In 1505 we find him in London again. In 1506 he was made bachelor of divinity by Cambridge University; after which he went to Italy, took the degree of D. D. at Turin, obtained permission of the reigning pope to exchange his monk's dress for that of a secular priest, wrought day and night on translations from the Greek and in editing Greek authors, taught several pupils of high birth, and, unfortunately, contracted a tormenting disease, the gravel, which clung to him to the end of his life. While crossing the Alps, in 1510, with the intention of revisiting England, his thoughts naturally reverted to his much admired friend, Sir Thomas More, and he mentally exclaimed: "How odd it is

that the wisest and wittiest man I know should bear a name which, in Greek, signifies the fool!"

This conception flashing upon his mind like lightning, and with the force of an inspiration, gave birth to a series of reflections on the multitude of fools the world contained, and on the manifold forms which folly assumed. This line of thought so delighted him that it grew into a purpose to compose a book, in which, under the mask of a eulogy of folly, all classes of society might be held up to ridicule. His wide range of reading, his observations of men, and his strong, ready memory, furnished his mind with such abundant materials that after arriving in London his ready pen, in little more than a week, put them into shape, and produced what has been not unjustly called, "one of the famous satires of the world." He entitled it, "The Praise of Folly." It became immediately popular all over Europe. Its sharp-toothed wit, its mirth-provoking humor, its graphic pictures of society, its scathing satire of the monks, of prevailing Church superstitions, of religious hypocrisy, of the subtle disputations of the schoolmen, and of the splendor maintained by the dignitaries of the Church, made most men laugh. Even the monks, at whom much of its wit was leveled, but who

were too thick skinned readily to feel the points of its satire, joined at first in the general laughter. The pope himself was amused by it. But when its effects on thinking men's estimate of the Church and her corrupt monastic orders became apparent, as it soon did, the monks grew fiercely angry, and denounced its author as a heretic. But for the absence from its pages of any serious purpose to strike the essentials of the Church, it is likely that the pope and cardinals would have treated him in the same manner. They, however, were loath to put him under ban, because of his brilliant literary reputation, and of the high regard entertained for him by the most learned men in Europe and by some powerful princes. Nevertheless, though they still treated him with tolerant courtesy, they never after, says Knight, one of his biographers, "looked upon him as a true son of the Church." And thoughtful men, who mourned in secret over the corruptions of the papacy, when they saw that the effect of his book on intelligent readers was to lower their traditional respect for Church ceremonials and Church dignitaries, were inclined to regard it as "the first decisive trumpet blast summoning the friends of light and learning to gird on their armor, and heralding the advance of that

reforming spirit with which the papal power was destined erelong to engage in deadly and terrible encounter." But as this result, though it actually followed, was entirely beyond the intent of Erasmus, it can not be justly passed to his credit.

After finishing his "Praise of Folly," this learned man gave the first lectures in Greek at Cambridge University, where, for a time, he filled the chair of divinity professor. Dissatisfied with the scant rewards of his labors at that seat of learning he soon left England, went to Basle to publish his books, obtained from Leo X a dispensation from his monastic vows, prepared a new edition of his valuable work, the "Adages," and, in 1516, did his most valuable service to the cause of truth by giving to the world his carefully edited and annotated edition of the New Testament in Greek.

In publishing his Greek Testament Erasmus said, "It is my desire to lead back that cold disputer of words, styled theology, to its real fountain." Through many previous ages men had been content to read the New Testament in its Latin translation by Jerome, known as the Vulgate, which, says D'Aubigné, "swarmed with errors. . . . Henceforward divines were able to read it in its original language, and at a later period to recog-

nize the purity of the Reformed doctrines. . . . Thus the New Testament of Erasmus gave out a bright flash of light. . . . The result of his labors even went beyond his intentions."

About the same time his active pen gave the world a succession of works, among which were a carefully edited edition of the works of Cyprian and Jerome, with a life of the latter eminent father; a paraphrase of the New Testament; translations of Origen, Athanasius, Chrysostom, and of the Greek Grammar of Theodore Gaza, "The Complaint of Peace," etc. These writings, while they excited the howlings of the monks, extended his fame, and, says D'Aubigné, "he soon became the most influential man in Christendom, and crowns and pensions were showered upon him from every side." Henceforth he no longer had occasion to write, as he did when he became councilor to Prince Charles of Flanders, that "he was living on his own juice like a snail, or rather like a polyp, gnawing his own limbs." The popularity of his books made their publication profitable. His income from this source, from pensions, and from the offices he held, placed him in very comfortable circumstances. His long conflict with poverty was ended.

But another and severer conflict was already

upon him. He had, as we have seen, been shooting the arrows of his wit at the poisonous fruit which was growing so abundantly on the tree of the papacy; but another man, of nobler mold than himself, had appeared on the scene, armed with weapons from the armory of heaven, and striking sturdy blows on the trunk of that accursed tree. Martin Luther, the humble monk of Erfurt, had spoken a few significant words which had sounded like the mutterings of an approaching storm throughout astonished Europe. The playful voice of Erasmus had awakened mingled feelings in which vexation and merriment struggled for mastery. The voice of Luther was causing a thrill of apprehension to disturb the breast of every Roman priest from the hooded monks in their cloistered convents to their triple-crowned master in his stately palace at Rome. Very clearly a great struggle had begun between the simple truth of Christ and the corrupt Church, which, for selfish ends, had hidden it for ages beneath false interpretations. Erasmus had written words which, if profoundly earnest and sincere, justified expectation in his readers that he would now employ his polished pen in defense of Luther. Will he do it? We shall see.

Luther, who had read with profit the writings

of Erasmus, had good reason for looking to him for countenance. His co-operation he seems not to have expected. Hence, in 1519, when he found himself in the midst of the noisy tumult caused by his famous theses, he wrote the honored scholar a friendly letter. The reply of Erasmus, while it was kind and complimentary to the reformer's character and ability, was so filled with courtly euphuisms about the impolicy of excessive severity, of disrespect for Church dignitaries, and of violent measures, that Luther was left in no doubt about the hopelessness even of approval from the man whose pliant courage was obviously limited by his fears, and who cared more for his popularity and personal safety than for the triumph of truth.

The monks, whose hatred of Erasmus was vindictive, now did their utmost to associate him with Luther. "Luther," some of them said, "is a pestilent fellow, but Erasmus is far worse, for it was from his breasts that Luther sucked all the poison in his composition." Others cried: "Erasmus laid the egg, and Luther has hatched it." In a public harangue one of them called Luther and Erasmus "beasts, asses, cranes, and clods." By these means those godless men hoped that when Luther went to the stake, as they expected he would, Erasmus

would not escape the fire. Their efforts alarmed the timid scholar, and we find him writing apologetic letters to the principal ecclesiastical dignitaries in Europe, and to Pope Leo X, disclaiming all connection with Luther, affirming that he had only the most superficial acquaintance with his writings, that he had no sympathy with his disloyal warfare against the papacy, and professing his own purpose to adhere to the Church as a loyal "friend to the Roman pontiff, who," he wrote, "is the chief herald of the Gospel, as other bishops are his heralds." In all this correspondence it was his object, as he declared, "to assure his eminence that he always had been, and always would be, the most devoted servant of the Holy See, to which he owed so many obligations."

It can not be doubted that these submissive letters led the papal authorities to put restraints on the monks, whose vengeful spirit found disgusting, yet fitting, expression in the shocking words of a Dominican, who was heard to say, "I should like to fix my teeth in Luther's throat, and would never hesitate to approach Christ's body with his blood still red on my lips." Doubtless, he would have done the same to Erasmus. The pope and his advisers saw the impolicy of laying violent hands on the

scholar, so distinguished that even the monarchs of Europe felt it not beneath their dignity to correspond with him. Hence, though the dignitaries of the Church could not quench the passions nor silence the tongues of the monks, they could and did hold them back from laying violent hands on the man who had made their inconsistent lives the butt of his merciless wit. The submission of such a man, with his avowed disapproval of Luther's doctrines and deeds, was worth much to them in their war against the Reformation. Besides, as the contest grew more and more violent, there was less and less ground for suspecting that Erasmus would go over to Luther's side. There was no heroism in his nature. Nor was he ashamed of his discreditable shrinking from the perils which opened like yawning graves in the line of a reformer's march. Rather he gloried in it, saying, "I prefer the present state of things, such as it is, rather than run the risk of exciting new commotions. . . . Let others affect martyrdom; I do not think myself worthy of such an honor." Surely, the papacy had nothing more to fear from such a craven spirit! Erasmus, quietly devoted to literary work, and professing adherence to the holy see, would be a silent hinderance to the Reformation. But Eras-

mus, persecuted or martyred, would intensify its spirit and multiply the dangers of the Church. For these reasons Rome was content, not merely to protect Erasmus from the monks, but also to reward him with gifts and honors.

It would, however, be unjust to this scholarly man to omit mention of what he did to soften the violence of Luther's enemies. While condemning the reformer's violent language, and especially his daring act of burning the pope's bull against him, Erasmus at the same time entered his protest against the policy which inspired the bull, and called the attention of Luther's enemies to the undeniable fact that existing abuses in the Church were, in some sort, a justification of Luther's demand for reformation. To the liberal-minded Elector Frederick at the time he stood in doubt whether to sustain or condemn Luther, Erasmus wittily remarked: "Luther has committed two sins, he has touched the pope on the crown and the monks on the stomach." Of the "bull" he wrote to Spalatin: "The pope's unmerciful bull is disapproved of by all honest men." But when, after Luther's glorious defiance of the papacy before the Diet of Worms, he saw that both parties were proceeding to extremities, he was vexed, and petu-

lantly exclaimed, "It is clear that the monks are thirsting for the blood of Luther, and, for my part, I do n't care whether they eat him roast or boiled!"

Perhaps this was a hasty expression, yet it showed how lightly he regarded the principles and effects involved in Luther's movement. Despite his feeble pleas for Luther, his own undisturbed literary pursuits looked more important to him than Luther's deadly battle with a corrupt Church. He desired peace more than he longed for purity. If the latter could be gained without commotion he would be on its side; but if the price of purity must be the sacrifice of peace and personal safety, then he preferred to let things remain as they were. His instincts were against existing corruptions which he had assailed up to the point where assault began to produce agitation and strife. Before these he quailed, paused, permitted his ignoble fears to suppress his nobler instincts, and to hold him back from the honorable career of a genuine reformer. One may admire the learning and literary skill of such a man, but one can not respect him very highly, nor rank him among the noblest of human kind. To the Reformation one Luther was a greater power than ten thousand scholars cast in the same moral mold as Erasmus.

During the early years of the Reformation Erasmus was in the University of Louvain pursuing his studies as quietly as the storm which was shaking Europe would permit. From 1521 we find him now at Antwerp, then at Bruges, next at Basle, Constance, Friburg, and finally at Basle again, where he died on the 12th of July, 1536, when nearly sixty-nine years of age.

Through the last sixteen years of his life his devotion to literary work was as unceasing as ever. Among his productions during this period was his "Colloquies," the most popular of all his writings, but which, being written in the same vein as his "Praise of Folly," caused his enemies to renew their accusations against him of disloyalty to the Church. In 1549 "a provincial council, held at Cologne, condemned it as unfit to be read in schools." His "Apothegms of the Ancients" was also the product of this period, as were many other works which can not even be named within the limits of a tract.

That his last years were far from happy, is scarcely questionable. He was able to live in external comfort, but his bodily afflictions were severe and constant; he also suffered much from variations in the weather. His mind, too, was kept on the

rack of anxiety on account of the machinations of his papist enemies, the distrust of the Church dignitaries who outwardly supported him, and the contempt in which he was held by the reformers. The first hated him; the second suspected him; the last despised him as a coward, most of them thinking what Farel expressed, saying, "Erasmus holds right opinions, but has not the courage to profess them." Many of them cherished the feeling which, as D'Aubigné states, made a "doctor of Constance hang the portrait of Erasmus in his study, that he might be able at any moment to spit in his face." Nor does it appear that his religious life abounded in divine consolations. Nominally he was a Christian, observant of some of the forms of Christian worship; but neither his writings nor his conduct, so far as known, contain satisfactory evidence that he was either orthodox in his opinions or a spiritually-minded man. "Deserting the standard of the Gospel," says D'Aubigné, "he lost the affection and esteem of the noblest men of the age in which he lived, and was forced to renounce, there can be little doubt, those heavenly consolations which God sheds in the heart of those who act as good soldiers of Christ." Could such a man be happy?

How his career appeared to himself when he drew nigh to the mystical gateway of eternity is not known. His death was caused by a painful dysentery, which, added to his long-standing tormenting diseases, made calm retrospection impossible. It is, however, creditable to his consistency, that his last hours were spent, not in listening to the mummeries of a Romish priest, but in prayer. He was heard continually exclaiming, "O Jesus, have mercy; Lord, deliver me; Lord, make an end; Lord have mercy upon me!" These cries may have had their origin in some small measure of saving faith, but they did not imply a triumphant trust.

The place of Erasmus in history is not among the greatest intellects and noblest characters of the human race. With its greatest scholars he is entitled to claim high rank, seeing that he was the foremost scholar, if not of any age, as some have asserted, yet of his own times. Though not a linguist in the sense of knowing many languages, he was more proficient in Greek and Latin than any man then living. He mastered the available classical and theological learning of that age. The master passion of his life was to diffuse that learning and to kindle a love for it in others. Out of this passion

came his unsurpassed industry; his steadfast persistence in study; his endurance of bitter hardships in the first part of his career; his scorn of the monastic orders, who hated him as much as they hated literature because of his writings against them; his world-wide friendships with learned men; and the limited measure of courage which he displayed in defying and deriding the monks. But scholarship does not necessarily imply intellectual greatness, which supposes creative and reflective power and an impressive force in expression that can not be found in Erasmus or in his writings, which are more remarkable for wit and humor than for strength and originality. Hence, his reputation stands not on the height of his intellectual stature, but on his scholarship and on that zealous use of it by which he was so largely influential in producing that remarkable revival of letters throughout Europe, which prepared the mind of the age for the Reformation. He plowed the intellectual ground in which Luther sowed the sacred seed of Protestant truth.

The moral stature of Erasmus was much lower than his intellectual. His nature was timid. He shrunk from suffering. This shrinking sprang from the sensitiveness of his nervous system and from

the absence of deep religious and moral convictions. Moral and spiritual earnestness would have conquered this natural timidity, and might have exalted him to a place in the noble army of martyrs. Lacking this, and lacking also profound evangelical faith in revealed truth, he took no decided stand for the Reformation, but rather opposed it the moment he perceived that Luther's methods were certain to provoke persecution. His literary impulses had carried him so far as to paint with a comic pencil the inconsistencies of the papal Church, knowing, without doubt, that so long as he did not assail the false theories out of which they grew, his high connections would keep his person safe from peril. Like the snail, which protrudes its horns, yet adheres firmly to its shell, Erasmus, while striking admitted evils with his facile pen, always sheltered himself beneath the shield of influential men, protesting that, however disloyal his writings might appear, he was nevertheless loyal at heart to the sources of the things which he portrayed in ridiculous garments. "He needed," says D'Aubigné, "that inward emancipation which alone gives perfect liberty. How different would he have been had he abandoned *self* and sacrificed all for the truth!" But, seeing that he preferred his personal

interests and popularity to the truth, despite his success in winning an illustrious name as a scholar, one can not review his career from the view-point of spiritual Christianity without summing it up in the exclamation, "unhappy Erasmus!"

X.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

The Father of English Poetry.

"He is the poet of the dawn who wrote
The 'Canterbury Tales,' and his old age
Made beautiful with song—and as I read
I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note
Of lark and linnet, and from every page
Rise odors of plowed field or flowery mead."

—LONGFELLOW.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER, the father of English poetry, was born in London, England, as is made certain by a passage in one of his works, wherein he says: "Also the citye of London, that is to me so dere and swete, in which place I was forth growen." The date of his birth is uncertain, though, on the authority of an inscription on his monument in Westminster Abbey, it is generally assigned to 1328. Had this monument, with its inscription, been placed there at the time of his death, it would be conclusive. But since it was not erected until 1556 the uncertainty remains.

His latest biographer, A. W. Ward, on the authority of Chaucer's statement concerning his age when under examination as a witness in a Westminster court, inclines to the opinion that he was born in 1340 or even later. But seeing that this date can not be made to harmonize with certain known events in his career as previously shown by Godfrey, it can scarcely be accepted as not open to dispute.

His numerous biographers have also been unable to determine his ancestry. Some affirm that he was nobly born, others that he was not descended from any great house. The conjecture of Mr. Speght, one of his editors, that he was the son of a London wine merchant, is quite as probable as any other. His childhood and youth are shrouded in an equally dense uncertainty; though, from the fact stated by himself in his "Court of Love," that he was a student of Cambridge University when eighteen years old, it is apparently clear that his father was sufficiently prosperous to give him a liberal education. London had already established at least three famous schools in connection with its principal Churches. "We may, therefore," says Godwin, "image to ourselves our youthful poet as resorting daily to some one of the classical seminaries of the metropolis, and contending with

his fellows for the prize of Latin verse or emulously reciting with them the elements of grammar and the rules for the præterites and futures of Latin verbs." After completing his preparatory studies in London it is supposed that he went to Cambridge, which, at that time, boasted of having six thousand students. Some authorities say that he was also an Oxford student. But how long he remained at either university, or whether he was or was not graduated at either, no record can be found to inform us.

Besides the influences which the dialectics and the Latin he acquired in London and at the universities—Greek was not then taught at either university—contributed to the formation of his character and the development of his genius, one must reckon the impression made upon his mind by the many learned men with whom he associated in those abodes of learning. Neither must it be forgotten that he lived at a period in England's history which was witnessing the dawning of her coming intellectual day. "The sun of science," says Godwin, "had risen, and the dews which welcome its beams were not yet dissipated." The nation was struggling to shake off the mental torpor inherited from the barbaric past, and to loosen

the shackles with which papal arrogance had bound it to a paganized Christianity. There was much, therefore, in Chaucer's London life to impress his poetic mind, and to fill his active fancy with the imagery which is a poet's food. Scholars, poets, and writers of both native and foreign birth, were much countenanced at the court of the reigning monarch. The king and his nobles, when seen by the public, were splendidly arrayed, and attended by numerous and gayly attired cavalcades mounted on magnificent steeds. The great merchants of London were immensely rich, and rivaled the barons in the splendor of their display. The pompous ceremonials of the Romish Church, her stately and venerable churches, the gorgeousness of her altars, with their burning tapers and the smoking of their fragrant incense, the frequent public processions of her priests, monks, and nuns in the varied robes of their respective orders, were all adapted to quicken his susceptible imagination into vigorous activity. Besides these things, the monks had their "miracle plays," their "moralities," their "mysteries," by which dramatic performances they sought to undermine the popularity of the numerous minstrels who amused the people by singing the deeds of chivalric knights, the songs of Roland, and the

feats of Arthur and his famous knights of the "Round Table." The people, too, had their rude sports on festal days, and were not unfrequently permitted to witness the exciting contests of mailed knights at public tournaments.

These were the stirring scenes amid which Chaucer passed his youth and early manhood, first in London and then at college. Mingling with their actors, his mind felt their touch, observed the various classes of men who took part in them, reflected upon them, assimilated what of them was congenial with his gifted nature, treasured up the impressions they made upon his imagination, and studiously combining their lessons with those he derived from books, wrought them into those poems which were the delight of his contemporaries and the sources of his fame. The effect of both his circumstances and education, and also of his relish for more retired companionship with nature, says Godwin, is "conspicuous in his writings." He is fond of allegories and reveries, for oft the poet

> "Brushed with hasty step the dews away,
> To meet the sun;"

and he is the poet of manners, because he frequented the haunts of men, and was acquainted with his species in all their varieties of modifications.

Chaucer's poetic genius bore fruit when, as some suppose, he was only eighteen years old, and while he was still a student at Cambridge. Before this, as he tells us, he had written

> "Many an hymne for your holy daies
> That highten balades, rondils, virelaies
> He hath made many a lay and many a thing."

But in this year 1346 he produced his "Court of Love," consisting originally of some two thousand lines. It is an allegorical composition, not a translation, but an apparently unconscious imitation of Ovid's "Art of Love," and of the writings of William de Lorris, a popular French writer. Its structure is natural, the flow of its language smooth, and its versification not inferior to that of his most finished productions. It is not without his characteristic humor, but it is barren of incidents, displays little invention, and its descriptions are feeble and vague. It, however, reveals the originality of his mind, in that it introduces the stanza of seven lines for the first time into English poetry. Later poets have used this heroic measure very freely, and it has been called the "rhythm royal." Perhaps one of the greatest merits of the "Court of Love" is, that it is written in the English language, which, since the Norman conquest, had been

treated with contempt. French had been made the language of the court, the bar, the Parliament, the baronial mansion, the schools, the colleges, and of such literature as England had previously produced. None but the poorer classes, and such of Saxon families as clung stubbornly to their ancestral speech, used the ancient language of the country. One or two inferior writers had written in English, but with little effect on its general use. But for reasons now unknown, Chaucer chose this noble but despised tongue as the garment of his teeming thoughts and beautiful impressions. It is likely that he had spoken it in his childhood, and wrote in it because he loved it. Possibly, his genius foresaw its ultimate triumph over the intrusive French. Be this as it may, his use of it restored it to its place in literature, and made him "the father of our language." "No one man," says Godwin, with scarcely pardonable exaggeration, "in the history of human intellect ever did more than was effected by the single mind of Chaucer." Still it may be questioned whether Chaucer contributed more to the English tongue than Wicklif did by his translation of the Bible, which was more read by the masses of the people than Chaucer's poems.

It is conjectured that Chaucer, after quitting

Cambridge, continued his studies at Oxford, from whence, following a custom then quite general with young Englishmen who sought superior scholarship, he visited Paris. In that city, as Leland, one of his early biographers, affirms, he finished his studies, "adding much to the stock of his science by the ardor of his application, . . . and acquiring much applause by his literary exercises." At Paris "he imbibed all the beauties, elegance, charms, wit, and grace of the French tongue, to a degree that is scarcely credible." After spending several years in France, the same writer states that Chaucer returned to England, studied law in London, but not finding its practice congenial with either his tastes or moral judgment, quitted its profession. Speght, another of his biographers, says that Chaucer was a member of the "Inner Temple," and that one "Master Buckley did see a record in the same house—the Inner Temple—where Geoffrey Chaucer was fined two shillings for beating a Franciscan friar in Fleet Street." But all these statements are without sufficient evidence to justify their acceptance as facts. Mr. Ward rejects them with unconcealed scorn. Nevertheless, they may possibly have a basis of truth, but must not be regarded as being more than probabilities.

Chaucer's second important work entitled "The Boke of Troilus and Creseide," is supposed by Godwin to have been written during or shortly after his residence at Oxford. It is "avowedly a translation" not, as is claimed by some, of Boccacio's "Filostrato," but of a Latin poem by Lollius, an Italian author, of whom nothing is certainly known. It is in five books. It is not an epic, but "merely a love tale," suggested by certain spurious narratives of the Trojan war, written in the times of Nero and Constantine by authors partial to the Trojans, as Homer is to the Greeks. It has many obvious faults and defects, anachronisms, and absurdities. But its many beautiful lines, exquisite tenderness, great delicacy, eminently idiomatic, clear, perspicuous style, harmonious versification, and natural action were a surprise to the cultivated minds of the age. Chaucer's "Court of Love" and his previous songs and ditties had delighted his personal friends, yet had not gained him public recognition. But, says Godwin, "the 'Troilus and Creseide' was, probably, more than any of his other works, the basis of his fame and the foundation of his fortune."

The story of "Palemon and Arcite," which is now found in his "Canterbury Tales," was his next production. It is one of the finest portraitures

extant of the days of chivalry, full of lofty sentiment and splendid descriptions. Yet such is the capriciousness of public taste that, though superior to "Troilus and Creseide," it at the time added nothing to his already brilliant reputation.

But when he was thirty years of age his great abilities and literary accomplishments attracted the attention of the reigning monarch, Edward III, the hero of the celebrated battle of Cressy. It was the custom of the kings of Europe at that period to constitute themselves patrons of learned men, to attach them to their courts, and to avail themselves of their literary conversation, their counsels, and their services. Hence the royal Edward, charmed by the productions of Chaucer's genius, sent for him, and, as if desirous of treating him more as a guest than as a mere servant of the crown, gave him a house situated near his own palace in Woodstock Park. In a poem, entitled his "Dream," Chaucer describes his new home as

"A lodge out of the way
Beside a well in a forest."

Of his bed chamber he says he slept

"In a chamber paint
Ful of stories old and divers.

. . . . . .

On the walls old portraitures
Of horsemen, hawkés, and of houndes,
And of hurt deer al full of woundes,
Some like bitten, some hurt with shot."

It is supposed, on apparently good grounds, that besides doing some private secretarial work, and drawing up state papers for the king, our poet became, if not a preceptor, yet a literary companion to John of Gaunt, Edward's third son, then eighteen years old, and subsequently the lifelong friend and patron of Chaucer. It is likely that he and the young prince, with Lionel, his brother, read the Latin poets, Norman romances, and other available works of imagination, together, and that by these and similar exercises the poet encouraged the prince to cultivate a taste for poetry, and to employ his pen in poetical composition.

But royal favor did not charm Chaucer into a life of literary idleness. His imagination was to him a fairy land, which it was the pleasure, as well as the work of his life, to describe. Heretofore the force of his genius, like the bubbling of a fountain, had moved him to write with a view to the approval of his scholarly associates; now it inspired him to write with a view to the entertainment of the king and court of England. Blazing with the luster of the amazing victories of Cressy and Poi-

tiers, that court was, at this period, the most splendid and influential in Europe. Though not "poet laureate" in name, Chaucer was the court poet in fact, and it was natural that he should seek to add to its military splendor the glory of such renown as might be accorded to the productions of his fascinating pen.

Moreover, he was a diligent student of books, as he tells his readers in his next poem, "The Parliament of Birds," where he says:

> "I woke, and other bokés took me to
> To rede upon, and yet I rede alway."

This habit of reading, like the springs which pour their contents into a lake of pure water, constantly fed his genius, kept it fresh and growing, so that each succeeding production was adorned with new grace and beauty. Hence he wrote

> "For out of olde feldés, as man saieth,
> Cometh all this newe corne from yere to yere,
> And out of oldé bokés, in gode faieth,
> Cometh all this newe science that men lere."

His "Parliament of Birds," which is characterized by much felicity of language and great wealth of fancy, was soon followed by his "Dream," which Godwin regards as an epithalamium upon the marriage of his princely friend, John of Gaunt, to the

princess Blanche, which took place on the 19th of May, 1359. In this poem Chaucer introduces the lady who, as some suppose, subsequently became his own wife. She was maid of honor to Queen Philippa, the daughter of a knight, and a highly accomplished lady. It is likely that, during the festivals and tournament held in honor of the prince's marriage, our poet was thrown into this maiden's society, and conceived the attachment which, becoming mutual, led to their marriage.

These marriage festivities were rudely disturbed by the noisy clangor of trumpets, summoning the warlike king, his nobles, and men-at-arms to war. The States-general of France had refused to ratify the truce made after the disastrous battle of Poitiers between their captive king and his conqueror, the chivalric Black Prince. Edward, therefore, called his followers to arms, resolved to make France a subject kingdom. With one hundred thousand men he sailed from England in October, 1359. Four of his sons and the flower of his nobility accompanied him. Our poet desirous, probably, of adding to his growing literary renown the honors of military service, which were more highly esteemed than any other in that age, also placed his sword at the king's service. In what

relation he stood to the army, or in what fighting he participated, is not known. That he was engaged in some skirmish or siege seems tolerably certain, in that he was taken prisoner by the French, and subsequently ransomed by his royal master, who paid sixteen pounds for that purpose. Probably his army experiences disgusted his peace-loving nature with military life, since, on his return to England, at the close of Edward's somewhat unsatisfactory campaign the following Spring, he laid aside his sword and resumed his more congenial literary pursuits. It has been noted to Chaucer's credit that, though he drew many striking pictures of knightly encounters in his poems, he never wrote a line in praise of war. He was "the poet of peace."

The "Romance of the Rose" was his next great poem. It was a translation of a French poem by William de Lorris and John de Meun, written in the thirteenth century, and contained twenty-two thousand verses. The reading world had esteemed it as the greatest literary work of its period. It was, doubtless, read at the English court in its original language. Chaucer determined to show his countrymen that the language of England was capable of giving full expression to the most ro-

mantic of poetical fancies, spent from two to three busy years in its translation, which, however, says Wood, "amounts to little more than one-third of the French original." It is largely narrative mixed with allegories and personifications. "The theme is the difficulty and the danger of a lover in pursuing the object of his desire. He has to gather a rose which grows in a delicious garden, and for this purpose he has to traverse vast ditches, scale lofty walls, and force the gates of castles. These holds are all peopled by various divinities, some of whom assist and some oppose his progress." It is both moral and immoral. It increased Chaucer's popularity, and its translation tended to the enrichment of his own style, and stimulated his genius to attempt original work.

In 1367 Chaucer received the appointment of valet of the chamber or household from King Edward, with a pension of twenty marks, estimated as equal to twelve hundred dollars, to be continued for life or until his majesty should otherwise determine. This pension was "for services performed and to be performed;" but whether these services meant his personal attendance on the king or his poetical labors for the good of literature, can not be ascertained. Probably both, since he may have

owed the appointment to the king's desire to recognize and reward his uncommon literary abilities. Coming from the king, however, during the absence in Spain of John of Gaunt, Chaucer's especial patron, this pension is proof that the poet was not patronized by that powerful prince alone, but that he also possessed the confidence of the king, and lived in the sunshine of royal approval as a member of his household.

In 1369 Blanche, the beloved wife of John of Gaunt, died. At the request, probably, of the princely widower, Chaucer composed "The Book of the Duchess," which he very felicitously opened with a dream, in which he joins a hunting party, from which he is led by the singular actions of a dog to a solitary spot, where he finds a lonely knight rehearsing to himself this song:

"I have of sorrow so great wone,
That joyë get I never none,
Now that I see my lady bright,
Which I have loved with all my might,
Is from me dead and is agone.
Alas! death, what aileth thee
That thou shouldst not have taken me,
When that thou tookest my lady sweet?
That was so fair, so fresh, so free,
So goodë, that man may well see
Of all goodness she had no meet."

This mournful knight is the bereaved John of Gaunt, who proceeds to utter a lament for the loss of his wife, in which he portrays the beauty of her person and character and the happiness of their wedded life. The poem "is full of beauties," and in it, says Mr. Ward, "Chaucer is finding his strength by dipping into the true spring of poetic inspiration, is awakening to the real capabilities of his genius, and is in some measure an Oriental poet."

About this time the death of the noble-minded Philippa, consort of Edward III, led to our poet's marriage. During the previous ten years, as is supposed, he had been suitor to Philippa Pycard, maid of honor to the queen. But this noble-born maiden being strongly attached to her royal mistress, and possibly for other unascertainable reasons, while not quenching the hopes of her patient lover, had persistently declined to name their marriage-day. Death having dissolved the tie which bound her to her royal mistress, she, in 1370, became our poet's bride. Whether she made his home happy or otherwise, is uncertain. Numerous passages in his poems, referring to women and marriage, are thought, by some, to imply that his married life was not peaceful. Others contend that he

wrote those lines as a poet, not as a man, and that they shed no light on his own domestic affairs.

The rising importance of Chaucer at court appears in the fact that, in 1370, he was sent abroad on a secret mission; and that, some two years later, he was entrusted with a commercial mission to Genoa. The king expressed his satisfaction with the results of his services in these affairs by giving him a grant for life of a daily pitcher of wine, which was finally commuted for an annual payment of twenty marks. Shortly after, his majesty appointed him "comptroller of the customs and subsidy of wools, skins, and tanned hides in the port of London." Another pension for life of ten pounds per annum was also granted him for services rendered by him and his wife to the duke and duchess of Lancaster and to the queen. In 1375 still other emoluments were given him. Thus his position in life was made both honorable and comfortable, albeit his official duties must have removed him somewhat from court society, and compelled him to form extensive acquaintance with merchants and men of business. But it did not alienate him from his books.

The visits of Chaucer to the Continent had made him personally acquainted, as some think

with Petrarch, and led him to study Italian literature with zeal and delight. Such studies improved his taste and led him to a closer culture of his own great powers. Hence, when his office compelled him to spend his days at the desk, the muses charmed him to his books and writing-table at night, as he says of himself:

"When thy labor done all is,
And hast ymadë reckonings,
Instead of rest and navë things
Thou go'st home to thine house anon,
And there as dumb as any stone
Thou sittest as another book."

Our poet is now one of the most distinguished men in the court of England. High trusts are confided to his keeping. In 1376 he is once more sent abroad on a secret mission. Two years later he is again on the Continent in the service of the crown. When an embassy is sent to the court of France to negotiate with Charles V for the marriage of his daughter Mary with Richard II, who is now on the throne of his deceased grandfather, Edward III, Chaucer is attached to it. Political reasons led Charles to decline this offer. His act brings no discredit on the ambassadors, since, when some important affairs with the authorities of the city of Milan need adjustment, Chaucer is sent

thither to represent the views of the court of England.

When young King Richard is about to wed Anne of Bohemia, in 1381, Chaucer celebrates the coming event in a beautiful marriage poem, which, doubtless, strengthens his influence with the king. His services are duly recognized by his appointment to the comptrollership of petty customs in London, and by permission to perform the duties of his old comptrollership through a deputy. And, as if to crown all these honors, he is made member of Parliament for the county of Kent in 1386.

These were busy years in our poet's life; but neither the fascinations of court life, nor the duties of his various offices and appointments, could wean him from his devotion to the muses. Hence, his biographers assign to this externally prosperous period of his career his "Legend of Good Women" and his "House of Fame." The latter poem, though not wholly a translation, is thought to be based on some work now unknown, from which he borrowed materials that his genius transmuted into things of beauty. It is highly imaginative, abounds in allegorical delineations, strokes of humor, and clearly cut traits of character. It also contains many passages expressive of the philosophy of life.

His "Legend of Good Women" was written at the request of the youthful Queen Anne, who, though delighted with the previous products of his pen, good naturedly rallied him on their unfavorable pictures of female character, and advised him, if he wished to be her poet, to produce something in which woman should be more justly treated. In obedience to this request he wrote the "Legend of Good Women."

Chaucer's good fortune culminated in 1384, not so much through any diminution of personal friendship on the part of the king and queen, as because of the ill will of a powerful faction formed for the purpose of destroying the influence of John of Gaunt, the king's uncle and Chaucer's friend and patron. That powerful prince was absent from England. His political enemies, envious of his wealth and power, conspired to destroy him. By vile misrepresentation they won the confidence of the weak, pleasure-loving king. Chaucer, being drawn into a contest which these conspirators provoked between the king and the citizens of London, and which terminated in the defeat of the latter, found it expedient to quit the country. While a refugee in Hainault, France, and Zealand, his resources were held back by false friends in

London, and he was reduced to great pecuniary straits. Urged by these necessities, after a year or two of exile, he ventured to return to his native land.

But his enemies were still in power, and disposed to treat so decided a friend of the hated John of Gaunt with severity. Hence they procured an order from the king for his arrest and imprisonment within the gloomy walls of the Tower. But for the disturbances caused by their traitorous schemings to deprive the king of his lawful prerogatives, they would, very probably, have sent Chaucer to the scaffold. But, absorbed in their own plottings, they were content to keep him neglected, forlorn, and forsaken by those who had professed to be his friends in the years of his prosperity until, in 1389, Richard II boldly asserted his royal rights, and sent the conspirators adrift. Shortly after this event Chaucer was liberated at the solicitation, as is supposed, of Queen Anne; but only on a condition not strictly honorable on his part. He was required to give the names of parties with whom he had acted during the civic troubles which had preceded his flight from England. Wearied by long imprisonment, disgusted with the men who had neglected him in his misfortunes, eager for liberty, for society, for

the recovery of his eclipsed prosperity, he gave the information desired, and was rewarded, not with deliverance from prison only, but, shortly after, with an appointment as "clerk of the king's works at Westminster, the Tower," and other places.

For reasons, not known, he lost this office in 1391, and was consequently in straitened circumstances until, in 1394, the king granted him a pension of twenty pounds per annum. In 1399 this pension was doubled by Henry IV immediately after his accession to the crown, which he had unjustly wrested from the unfortunate Richard II. On the 25th of October, 1400, Chaucer died in London, to which city he had removed after having spent several years, as tradition affirms, in quiet retirement at his house in Woodstock, where, it is thought by Godwin, he wrote the greater part of his most famous work, the "Canterbury Tales." His remains were buried in Westminster Abbey.

During his long imprisonment, Chaucer is supposed to have written his "Testament of Love," in imitation of the "Consolations of Philosophy," by the Roman Boethius, which, in earlier and brighter days, he had translated into English. Chaucer does himself scant justice, either as a man or poet, in this work which, though not without much to com-

mend it to the taste of literary readers, is chiefly valuable as a transcript of his thoughts and feelings while staggering beneath the weight of grave misfortunes, and living in dread of an ignominious death. But his "Canterbury Tales," written in a condition of assured comfort and in the light of royal favor, contain the brightest and best coinage of his genius. Professor T. B. Shaw calls the work "a finished picture, delineating almost every variety of human character, crowded with figures, whose lineaments no lapse of time, no change of manners, can render faint or indistinct, and which will retain, to the latest centuries, every stroke of outline and every tint of color as sharp and as vivid as when they came from the Master's hand. The pilgrims of Chaucer have traversed four hundred and eighty years, . . . and yet their garments have not decayed, neither have their shoes waxed old."

Exquisite delineation of characters, each of which is the type of a class, is doubtless the characteristic excellence of the "Canterbury Tales." Their materials were borrowed from French and Italian literature, but were treated like gold-dust, which is melted, refined, and passed through the mint. They were so thoroughly assimilated by his

mind, and so newly shapen by his vigorous imagination, as to bear the stamp of originality. The plan of these tales is very simple. "Nine and twentyin a company of sundry folk" met in the yard of the Tabard Inn, London, bound on a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Thomas of Becket, at Canterbury. They agree to travel together. Each, in turn, is to relate an instructive and amusing story. Tell us, said the *Host* of the Tabard to this motley assemblage,

> "Some merry thing of adventures;
> Your termës, your colóurs, and your figûres,
> Keep them in store, till so be ye indite
> High style, as when that men to kingës write;
> Speak ye so plain at this time, we you pray,
> That we may understandë that ye say."

The stories of these varied personages, representing nearly every class of society, together with the "description of their characters and manners, form a picture of life and manners altogether unrivaled." "Chaucer's men and women," says Campbell, "are not mere ladies and gentlemen. They rise before us minutely traced, profusely varied, and strongly discriminated. Their features and casual manners seem to have an amusing congruity with their moral characters. . . . What an intimate scene of English life in the fourteenth century do we

enjoy in those tales, beyond what history displays by glimpses, through the stormy atmosphere of her scenes, or the antiquarian can discover by the cold light of his researches. . . . After four hundred years and more have closed over the mirthful features which formed the living originals of the poet's descriptions, his pages impress the fancy with the momentary credence that they are still alive, as if time had rebuilt his ruins and were reacting the lost scenes of existence."

"These remarkable tales," says the enthusiastic Godwin, "are the basis of Chaucer's reputation, and are more read in modern times than any of his minor poems." They have been said to be "one of the most extraordinary monuments of human genius." Nevertheless, it must be confessed that there is much dross mingled with their precious ore. If they are splendid in descriptions, rich in their varied fancies, pathetic in their stories of human sufferings, beautiful in their pictures of natural scenery, vocal almost with the songs of birds, exquisitely humorous, cheerful even to gayety, witty and satirical in dealing with some vices, moral and religious in sentiment, they are also, in many parts, coarse, vulgar, filthy, clownishly jocose, and offensively irreligious. While they

may be innocently read, as belonging to the literature of our language, by those whose mental tastes and moral feelings enable them to pluck their flowers without being pierced by their thorns, yet they can not, as a whole, be commended as suitable reading for the youthful and immature. Chaucer himself, well aware that his verses contained objectionable matter, said to him who complained of it:

> "For he shall find enough, both great and small,
> Of storial thing that toucheth gentleness,
> Likewise morality and holiness;
> Blame ye not me, if ye should choose amiss."

Miserable, indeed, is this defense! Certainly he who is tempted by the charm of impure reading to steep his mind in evil is blameworthy. But he who offers the attractive poison is still more guilty. He acts the part of a tempter, and is without just excuse.

Chaucer, though professing a nominal faith in the verities of the Christian religion, appears to have been a man of the world. Like John of Gaunt, he is supposed to have been an admirer, if not a supporter, of Wiclif, but chiefly on political grounds. He went with the reformer in his hostility to the pope, but was apparently without sympathy for the spiritual side of his life and work.

His long-continued popularity at the court suggests that he was, by nature, a courtier. His writings show that he was of a placid, gentle, modest nature; cheerful, vivacious, unpretentious, frank, easy, approachable, and companionable. His biographers represent that he was convivial and gay, fond of social life, and given to expensive habits, which depleted his purse, and compelled him to tax the liberality of the three monarchs who successively patronized him. He was true in his friendships, enthusiastic in his pursuit of knowledge, and wrote not chiefly from a desire for reputation or profit, but because moved thereto by the irresistible promptings of his genius.

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